THE PLAYSTATION®3 MAGAZINE

PSM3

3 | PlayStation 2 | PSP

"The ending will be epic. People will talk about MGS4 for years to come"
Kojima Productions

UK FIRST HANDS-ON!

MGS4

'Wave form' play? Kojima's proudest, fiercest invention revealed on pg22...

15

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PSM3 Start

"2008 will belong to PS3. No, really..."

Look, if a bad year means *Call Of Duty 4*, *Ratchet & Clank* and *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune* – don't miss our 2007 review on page 44 – then there's every reason to be optimistic about 2008. Our report on page 10 suggests that current games are only tapping 30% of PS3's potential, as developers reveal how they'll exploit its hidden power. We're saving our bumper 2008 preview until next issue – unlike some mags, who are currently peddling old cut-outs of Agent 47 and baseless speculation about *Hitman 5*. We'll, er, do that next month instead (not really). Console yourself with the UK-first hands-on and solid facts on *MGS4* on page 22. Enough optimism. Happy bloody new year.

In the making of this issue of PSM3...
One top new band.
A 'few' calls about trading cards.
267 online *CoD4* flunkies iced.

Daniel Dawkins Editor
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

The PSM3 Promise

☑ **The sharpest opinions** Every bit of the magazine is dedicated to giving you more information. If we're worried that a feature in a game isn't working, we'll not only tell you about it, but we'll have a word with the developer too.

☑ **The biggest games** Fact is, if a game makes it into the pages of PSM3 then it's something worth knowing about. PSM3 says no to lazy page fillers and boring 'me too' games.

☑ **The richest detail** We finish every game we review. Our secrets are the result of us playing the game and finding them ourselves. We've got what you want to know and tell you how you want to hear it.

☑ **The most committed videogame mag team** The PSM3 team live and breathe PlayStation. There's no game we haven't played and there's no end to our quest for knowledge and gaming greatness.

☑ **The best DVD action** We've got the best DVD in the business. We cram it with the best PS3, PS2 and PSP games each and every month. For free.

Three to read first...

"Snake disguises himself as a statue, holding another's genitals"

Talk about hands-on – the first of **MGS4's** many surprises... – page 22

"A bumper pack like you've never seen"

The Orange Box: definitive review – page 68

"PS3's first full year on sale has been a rollercoaster 365 days"

It's our exhaustive **Review Of 2007** – page 44

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January 2008
Issue 96
psm3mag.com

The PlayStation 3 Magazine

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We get an exclusive hands-on with the game we want most of all.

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Playing PlayStation longer, harder, deeper.

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The most powerful, amazing special moves in *Disgaea*.

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Drifting around the Eiffel Tower a kajillion times in *Juiced 2*. Tres bon.

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Dirty your hands by cheating through *TimeShift* and more.

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Why *Call Of Duty 4* is the clear winner on the online battlefield.

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Laughter is the best medicine, after all.

"Stunning beauty and cinematic action"
We go loopy for **Uncharted: Drake's Fortune** – page 60

peephole
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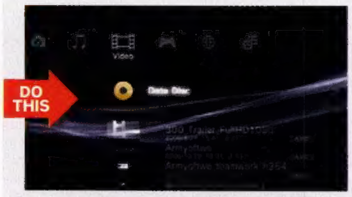
A B

FEATURING Unreal 3 | Army Of Two | Burnout Paradise | Rock Band | Orange Box | Condemned 2 Lego Batman | Uncharted | FIFA Street 3 | Viking | TimeShift | Bionic Commando | Turok | More

SIDE 2: HOW TO

Copy your HD files onto your PS3



Step one
You need to download the hi-def movies onto your hard drive to view them properly. Insert Side B of the disc into your PS3, then click across to Video on the cross-media bar. Select the disc and press ⓐ. Choose Display All from the menu, and highlight the trailers you want to Copy and download.

Step two
The trailers will download to your hard drive in a few minutes or less. When they're done, they'll appear as rolling video thumbnails – click ⊗ to play your chosen HD movie. Enjoy.

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PS3, PS2 & PSP footage

SIDE A: DVD FOOTAGE All-new footage of all the biggest PS3 games, including *FIFA Street 3, Condemned 2, Alone In The Dark* and stacks of others – and listen out for our no-holds-barred audio reviews as well.

The Orange Box

Its the value-package of the year – five *Half-Lifes* in one box (er, 2.5 *Full-Lifes*?) Check out our review on 68.

Rock Band

It's the party game of the decade – Harmonix's genius title lets you live your daft rock star fantasies.

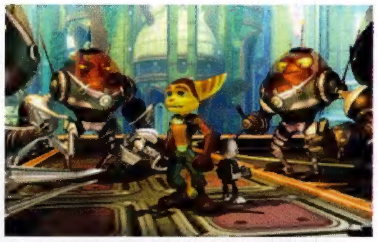
+ Burnout Paradise | **Frontlines** | TNA Impact | **Assassin's Creed** | Wet | **More**

PS3 HD video files

SIDE B: PS3 HD FILES Want to see games in true Hi-Definition? Our HD files – which need to be downloaded to your hard drive (see above) – include *Viking: Battle For Asgard, Lego Batman, Army Of Two* and loads more. Don't miss out.

Unreal Tournament 3

Sure, the characters are beefy sci-fi parodies, but Epic's multi-player focused FPS is a technical marvel.



PS3 Game Saves

To get 100% complete PS3/PSP game saves (we've got loads), copy these files to a memory stick.

+ Bionic Commando | **DMC4** | The Club | **Blacksite** | Lost Planet | **Pain** | More

radar update
Burnout Paradise

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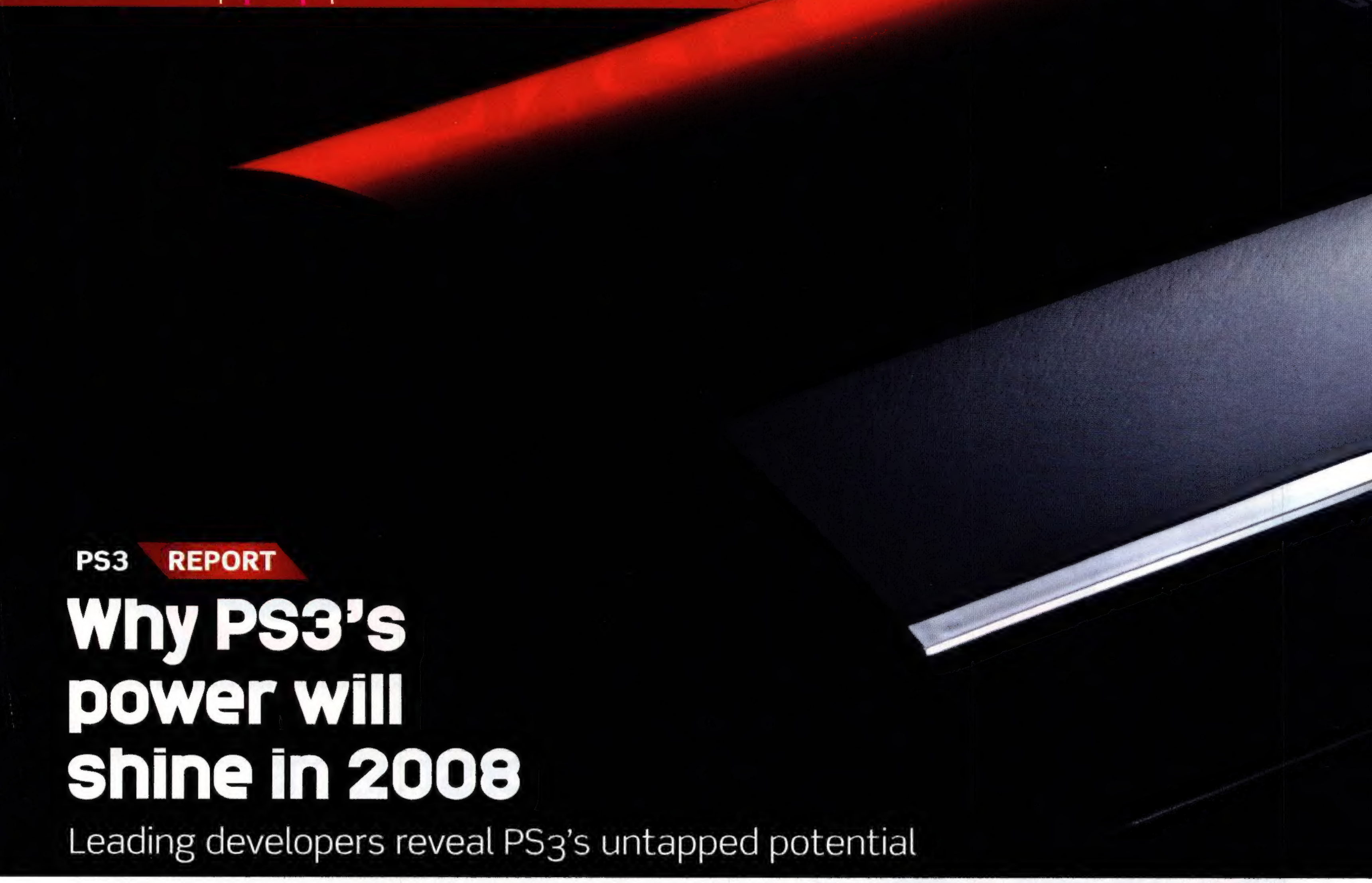


PS3 REPORT

Why PS3's power will shine in 2008

Leading developers reveal PS3's untapped potential

Playstation 3 will flourish in 2008 – not our words, but the emerging concensus among the global development community. With genuinely exciting exclusives flickering on the horizon (see *MGS4* on page 22) and a growing community of developers coming to grips with the possibilities on offer from the hardware, the future's looking bright.

While some developers have been critical of PS3's complex architecture (yes, Gabe Newell from Valve, we're pointing at you – see PSM95) many more are praising the power and potential of the machine.

"The amount of action we're able to put on the screen at 60 frames per second dwarfs what we were able to do a year ago at 30 frames per second," claims Insomniac's (*Resistance*, *Ratchet*) Chief Creative Officer Brian Hastings, "What's most exciting is I think we'll see just as big a leap from our second generation engine to our third as we did from first to second."

Rein of fire

User-created content will be a feature of 2008, claims Epic boss Mark Rein (*Unreal Tournament 3*). "We're really excited about bringing robust user-created content to PS3. PC gamers can use the included *Unreal Engine 3* tool set to create mods which can be played on PS3."

The modding capabilities of *UT3* – with Sony's *Little Big Planet* to follow, allowing users to trade levels, costumes and stickers online – are, as Rein reminds us, "a first for any game console... and way more important than polygons."

Dave Connell, Lead Console Programmer over at Traveller's Tales (of *Lego Star Wars* fame) is equally pleased, describing PS3 as "a very powerful piece of kit".

"Once you put the effort in and start to understand the hardware, you can see PS3's huge technical potential," Connell told us, observing that "the SPUs [Synergistic Processor Units] are key to unlocking PS3's flexibility."

"The SPUs challenge us to come up with completely new tech ideas and to develop new features around them. We are going to see the quality of PS3 titles improve for many years to come as people get to grips with them. It might turn out that things we've not even thought of end up best demonstrating the power of PS3."

Fallout 3's Executive Producer Todd Howard – from *Oblivion* developer Bethesda – understands that PS3 "has more than enough power. No single game is using it all yet – not even close".

Back at E3 in July '07, *Mercenaries 2* Lead Designer Scott Warner claimed their game

Coming soon...

Here are the PS3 exclusives set for 2008 so far – and it's quite a list. Loads more on these next issue in our 2008 Preview Special... ***Haze, Unreal 3, Gran Turismo 5, Home, Pain, LittleBigPlanet, Killzone 2, Afrika, Tekken 6, White Knight Story, The Agency, SOCOM Confrontation, Time Crisis 4, Everybody's Golf 5, Final Fantasy XIII, WipEout HD, Toy Home, Buzz! Quiz TV, PixelJunk Monsters, High Velocity Bowling, Echochrome.***

ON THE DISC
There are 30 hi-def trailers on the disc

Happy New Year 2008 is looking like a very strong year for PS3, with loads of terrific games.

was only using 30% of PS3's power – while EA's Chief Visual Officer Glenn Entis claimed their launch games like *Fight Night 3* only tapped 20%. The figures sound hokum, but it wasn't until five years into PS2's life cycle that games tapped even 90% of its power – a statistic measured by Sony's Performance Analyser tools, yet to be released on PS3.

Lighting effects will improve, claim middleware experts Geomerics. "Games will look more natural, with awesome reflection effects. None of our lighting is pre-calculated, as 'pre-baking' lightmaps is still industry practice. PS3's power means we can use effects that were previously reserved for Hollywood, or high-end CGI applications and giant render farms." The search for the new 'lens flare' starts here…

Pub Various | **Dev** Various | **ETA** TBC

Views "It's like being able to design your own boat"

Five leading game developers give us their thoughts on the power of PS3

Brian Hastings, Insomniac

"I think we'll see just as big a leap from our second generation engine to our third as we did from the first to second… Moving more and more code to the SPUs is an ongoing process and I think we'll continue to see major benefits from this for several more years."

Mark Rein, Epic

"The possibilities it opens up shouldn't be underestimated. This isn't just the idea of being able to rearrange the deck chairs, but being able to design your own boat – and create your own chairs from scratch too."

Todd Howard, Bethesda

"One of the big strides that's been made over the last year is not just developers like us learning how to use that power, but that Sony's dramatically improved the tools we use to see where the game is slowing down."

Dave Connell, Travs' Tales

"As we work on our games for next year, including *Lego Indiana Jones* and *Lego Batman*, we're certain there's a lot more to get out of the system than people have seen so far."

Bruce Heather, EA UK

"Our seamless streaming of a fully open world utilises parallel SPU processing, and I'm really excited about how we can bring a complete world to life on PS3 using our advanced new physics system and enhanced lighting model."

ON THE DISC
You can see *Burnout Paradise* in hi-def action now

The Opinionator

"Sony's new year's resolutions should be..."

Let's be honest; it hasn't been a great year for PS3. It's been *decent*, sure, but with all the delays, the lack of exclusive games and Sony's inept advertising, the console's struggled to top the well-established Xbox 360, or innovative Wii. But Sony can change all of this by making some bold new year's resolutions, starting with... 1) More exclusives – many of this year's best PS3 games were on Xbox too. Sony Marketing boss Peter Dille has revealed that there will be at least 15 PS3 exclusive games next year, but this needs to grow.

Advert calendar

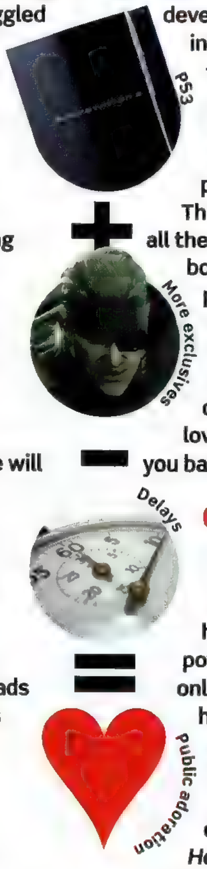
2) Stop the stupid ads – No more acrobats or circus folk, please. Last issue we applauded Sony on their American PS3 ads, because they showed off actual games and made the console look powerful. The UK Christmas ads are, at best, a load of pretentious, hark-at-us arthouse nonsense. Show people why they need PS3. Sell the value. That's it.

Helping hand

3) Support third-party developers properly – industry folk tell us the hardware's difficult to work with, and that Sony were slow to provide support. This is the reason for all the delays. As Sony boss Kaz Hirai promised at E3, improve middleware tools and make smaller developers feel loved. They'll love you back with games.

On top

4) Be *better* than Xbox 360. It's not hard – the hardware is more powerful, playing online is free, Blu-ray has more capacity. Get games out on time, and create unique reasons to choose Sony – like *Home*, *LBP* and the TV Tuner promise. 5) Maintain humility – Nobody likes a big corporation that acts like a big corporation. Got all that, Sony? Good. Happy New Year. **Andy Kelly**



Myth-Buster

SEEN THIS?

The price cut didn't really affect PS3 sales one bit

THE TRUTH

Since Sony reduced the price of the 60gb machine to £349 and introduced the 40gb PS3 for £299 in October, some quarters of the internet have claimed that sales have barely been affected. This is a blatant falsehood, though, as the figures show that PS3 sales rocketed by 178% in the first week of the price-cut – that's the third-best week PS3 has had since its launch. The other two were, naturally, in the fortnight following the machine's launch. And it continues to sell very well indeed, prompting analyst Hiroshi Kamide to say that "Sony is making up lost ground." We haven't received Christmas sales figures yet, but as their share price just went up 11%, we're confident Sony will have done very well indeed.

"Take a snap of your face the very moment you crash"

Thrill List

The latest news on PlayStation's hottest games, every issue

1 Burnout Paradise

Get your face into the carnage

The PS3 version of Criterion's free-roaming drive-'n'-smash-'em-up gets an exclusive 'mugshot' feature that uses the PlayStation Eye to take a snap of your face the moment you crash, displaying it on-screen during online matches to amuse your opponents. Awesome. Besides that, it's business as usual. Crash mode is back (renamed Showtime) and you can now choose from *Burnout 1, 2, 3* or *Revenge*-style boost meters to suit your playing style. What *Paradise* lacks in fresh gameplay ideas, it should makes up for in mode variety and entertaining distractions.

Pub EA | **Dev** Criterion | **ETA** January

Wreck and roll We can't wait to turn this car into a flaming pile of wreckage.

When in roam... How will the free-roaming structure affect *Burnout*? We'll have to wait and see.

2 Rainbow Six: Vegas 2

Ubi gamble on another *R6 Vegas*

It's almost *Rainbow Six*'s tenth anniversary, so to celebrate Ubisoft are, er, releasing another *Vegas* game. You play as a new *R6* team, directly following the events of the last game. Anyway, screens indicate it's going to be similar to the original. We hope they expand on the hit-and-miss online mode, with bigger levels and more character customisation options.

Pub Ubisoft **| Dev** Ubisoft Montreal **| ETA** Autumn

3 Deus Ex 3

Back to genuine greatness?

After the disappointing second game, *Deus Ex* fans are a bit worried about this being rubbish. But they needn't be; the teaser trailer (watch it here: http://tinyurl.com/ypap7h) nails the tone of the original perfectly. We don't know what direction Eidos Montreal are taking this, but we do know it's a prequel, set around 25 years before the first game. Expect heavy role-playing combined with traditional first-person shooting and a plot thick with conspiracy. We can't wait.

Pub Eidos **| Dev** Eidos Montreal **| ETA** Winter 2008

4 Top Spin 3

The serious side of tennis

In *Virtua Tennis* all you have to do is jab a button when the ball nears the racquet, but in *TS* you have to subtly tweak the strength of your shot to determine where the ball will land and how hard your player hits it. The game features over 40 pros – including John McEnroe and Pete Sampras – and dozens of courts. The game also boasts a unique online mode that resets the leaderboards every two weeks (so everyone's got a chance at the top) and that pairs up players of equal skill to make matches fair.

Pub 2K Sports **| Dev** PAM **| ETA** Spring

Spin out *Top Spin* is a decidedly serious game, but it's also exhaustive and compulsive.

5 Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway

More WW2 action

We played a level that takes place during Operation Market Garden in Holland and sees you defending a crashed glider from the Nazis. If one of your comrades is shot down, the game switches to – and we can't believe we're saying this – 'bro-mo' mode and the computer takes over your character, catching your mate before he slumps to the floor. Oh, and you can *literally* cut men in half with gunfire.

Pub Ubisoft **| Dev** Gearbox **| ETA** Spring

ON THE DISC
See Blacksite in hi-def on the disc

"This project was so f**ked up"

PS3 **REPORT**

Blacksite developer trashes own game

Area 51 man goes mad, falls on sword

You don't often hear a developer criticising his own game, but in a move of refreshing – if possibly fatal – candour, that's what Harvey Smith (Creative Director on *Area 51: Blacksite*) did in November.

Speaking at the Montreal Games Summit, Smith responded to questions about the game's relatively low US review scores (it just came out in States, to scores averaging in the 60s) by saying, "with a year to go [of development] the game was disastrously off the rails."

"Everyone was forced to share tech," he continued. "It took eight months to get one thing running." He then complained there wasn't enough time to polish the game before release – which he claimed to be "reprehensible" and concluded by saying "this project was so f**ked up".

The next day, Smith left Midway – publisher of *Area 51* – 'by mutual consent'. You can read into that what you will, but needless to say we'll be bringing you the definitive review of *Blacksite* – which isn't scheduled for release in the UK until January 25 – just as soon as we can. We're not really looking forward to playing it as much now, mind you.

Pub Midway | **Dev** Midway | **ETA** Jan 25

HEY DUSTBALL, HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE AMAZING POTENTIAL THE PS3 HAS OPENED UP FOR PSP OWNERS DUE TO THE CONNECTIVITY OF THE TWO CONSOLES THAT MEANS NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE IN THE WORLD, AS LONG AS YOU HAVE YOUR PSP WITH YOU, YOU CAN STREAM ANY NUMBER OF THINGS, LIKE MOVIES, PHOTOS OR MUSIC, THAT HAVE BEEN STORED ON YOUR PS3 AND VIEW THEM OR LISTEN TO THEM ON YOUR PSP WHICH MEANS YOU ARE NO LONGER LIMITED TO THE CAPACITY OF THE MEMORY STICK TO ACCESS CONTENT ON YOUR PS3 THEN GO ON HOLIDAY OR BUSINESS, ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD AND WATCH IT ON YOUR PSP, DUSTBALL DID YOU KNOW THAT?
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"All the atmosphere that goes with a race day"
Race Driver: GRID page 16

Crash in the pan There'll probably now be even more *Crash* games. Lord save us.

Hero worship *Guitar Hero* will now have access to Universal music to broaden its catalogue of songs.

PS3 REPORT

Merger creates publishing colossus

Activision and Vivendi/Sierra merge – but what does it mean for you?

Activision, publishers of *Guitar Hero*, and Vivendi/Sierra, owners of *World Of Warcraft* creators Blizzard (and Crash Bandicoot), have merged to form one mega-company, Activision Blizzard. This means that they're now bigger than industry giants EA and that they'll hold a staggering 15% of the worldwide gaming market.

But the sad news is, *World Of Warcraft* won't be coming to PS3. "Blizzard's focus is on the PC side," explained Blizzard CEO Mike Morhaime. But it does mean that Activision will have access to wider resources, so, for instance, *Call Of Duty 5* will be (even) more epic, *Guitar Hero* will have access to Universal music, including bands like The Killers and Def Jam music.

The new company's games include a James Bond project (give it to Infinity Ward, please...) and a new racing title from Project Gotham developers Bizarre Creations. "You can expect every one of these properties to be exploited annually or on a near-annual basis," he added, which we hope doesn't mean they'll start churning out sequels, EA-style.

Done properly, it'll mean, better games. But it could just as easily mean titles rushed out to appease profit-hungry shareholders. In fact, we expect a bit of both. We'll see what the future brings.

[illegible] there *World Of Warcraft* won't be coming to PS3. Boo, new games company. Boo and hiss.

ON THE DISC
[illegible]

PS3 **REPORT**

Get yourself on the GRID

Codies' racer set to rival *Gran Turismo 5*

Codemasters' are readying *Race Driver: GRID* for summer '08 release – but the next iteration of the *TOCA* series has already steered into controversy. Hardcore fans are upset at the series' new street racing elements, but – don't worry – the realistic handling that TOCA is synonymous with remains.

While you'll still get to bomb around fully-licensed tracks like Silverstone, you'll also be travelling the globe to race over three continents. So one minute you could be drifting Toyotas around the Japanese countryside, the next flying down the steep hills of sunny San Francisco. In fact, whisper it, it's a bit like Xbox 360's *Project Gotham*.

We're promised *GRID* will concentrate on all the atmosphere that goes with a genuine race day, so expect to stoke up heated rivalries with competitive AI drivers and to tune your car so it's just right for the race ahead. We'll have more soon.

Pub Codemasters | **Dev** Codemasters | **ETA** Summer

Features | Reasons *Race Driver: GRID* could rock

Five steps to recreating the atmosphere and intensity of street racing

Crowds

The trackside gatherings we've seen so far in *GT5* have been anaemic compared to *GRID's* packed environments. We're yet to see if they'll be animated, but the sheer number of folk makes for an atmospheric setting.

Drifting

Codies are competing against *Need For Speed* and *Juiced* by including modified cars, street racing and drift challenges. We're promised the usual variety of vehicles, and it's nice to see different race types. It should be plenty varied.

Replays

With multiple camera angles and – we're hoping – editing tools, *GRID* could provide some beautiful replays indeed. We'd be extremely surprised if there isn't an online option to allow you to upload your best movies.

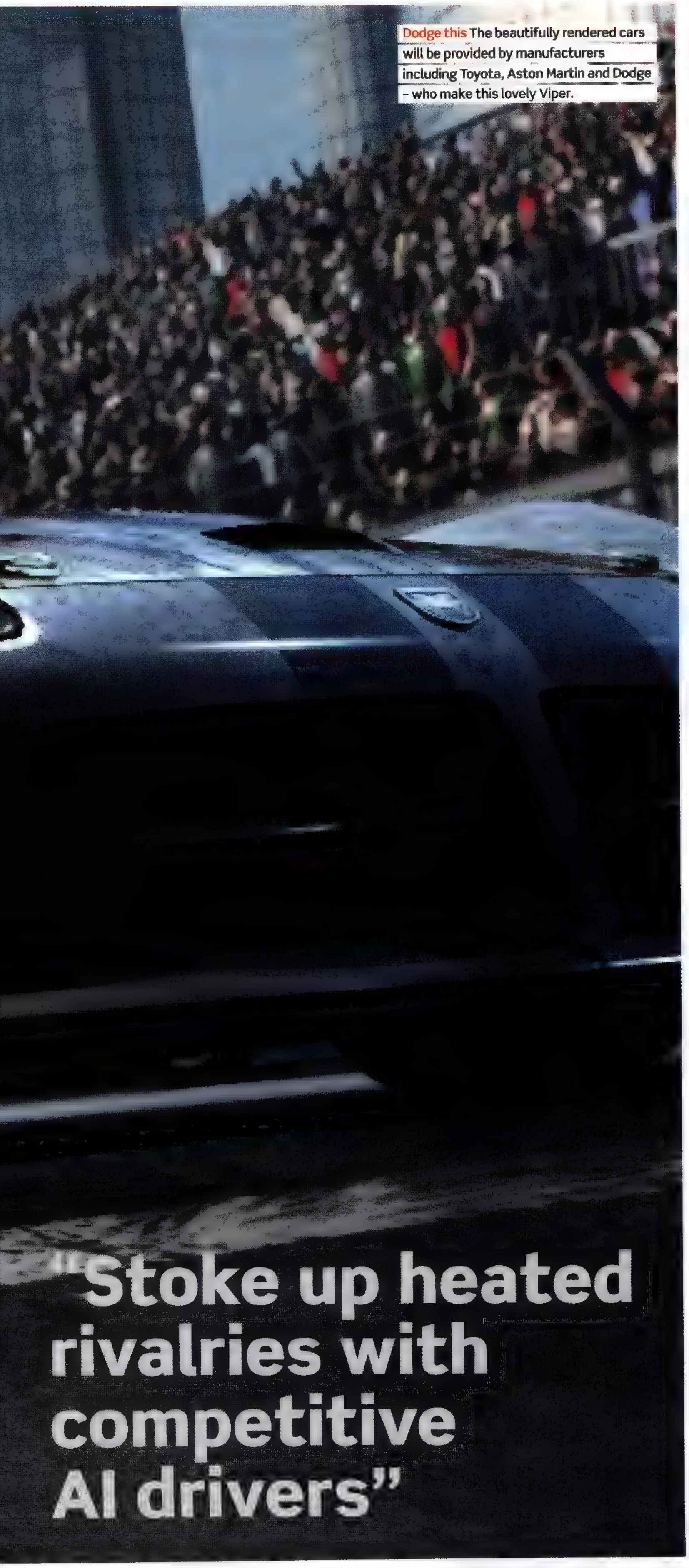
Environments

The details in the surroundings is awe-inspiring. Check out how beautiful those buildings look. Sure, all of this is purely cosmetic, but compare this to the dull visuals of many racers. It's loads better.

Opposition AI

Some racers will go to any lengths to secure their place in the race, including shunting their enemies off the track and into other cars. This adds character to your rivals on the track and should make for some exciting races.

"A cross between Cribs and *NBA Jam*"
NBA Ballers: Chosen One page 18



Dodge this The beautifully rendered cars will be provided by manufacturers including Toyota, Aston Martin and Dodge - who make this lovely Viper.

"Stoke up heated rivalries with competitive AI drivers"

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ON THE DISC
Dead Space is on the disc this month

The last minute shots of big importance

The freshest pics, squeezed in as we go to press

PS3 **NBA Ballers: Chosen One** Cartoon b-balling bounces back

Details **Pub** Midway | **Dev** In-house | **Genre** Sports

Lowdown Following the mild success of EA's *NBA Homecourt*, Midway are bringing back *NBA Ballers*. *Chosen One* is a cross between MTV Cribs and *NBA Jam*, allowing you to go toe-to-toe with basketball stars such as Steve Nash and Tim Duncan, and pimp your playgrounds with Lear jets or expensive penthouse courts. In return you'll have more friends turn up to watch you slam your opponent's ass at B-ball. Nice.

ETA Spring

PS3 **Legendary: The Box** Lifting the lid on a brand new IP

Details **Pub** Atari | **Dev** Spark Unlimited | **Genre** FPS

Lowdown *Legendary* is from the men behind *Turning Point* and *CoD: Finest Hour* – so something of a departure. It stars art thief Charles Deckard, who accidentally opens Pandora's Box. As you do. Griffins, werewolves and minotaurs are soon tearing up New York, smashing up cabs and chasing pedestrians through Time Square. It's a novel twist on the FPS genre and looks promising. Expect epic monster battles, and an in-depth preview soon.

ETA Summer

PS3 **Dead Space** ...Or *Resident Evil* on a spaceship

Details **Pub** EA | **Dev** EA | **Genre** Action

Lowdown Although Dead Space 'borrows' loads of ideas from other games (*Resident Evil*) and films too (Alien, The Thing) it sort of works. Playing as intergalactic mechanic Isaac Clarke, you're sent to a mining ship for a routine repair mission only to find aliens devouring the crew. Nasty. This third-person thriller sees you battling to stay alive while salivating creatures – like giant tentacled monsters with human heads poking out of their stomachs – leap out on you from the darkness.

ETA September

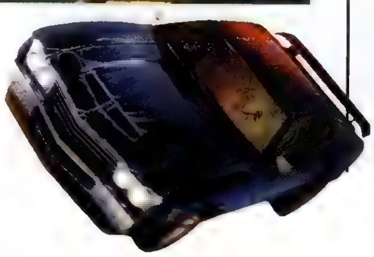
ROUND 1/3
SCORE
Launch
POSITION
6
LAP
POWER HIT
ROUND 1/3
SCORE 710
54 POINTS
RINGS
Aerobatics
166

PSP **FlatOut Head On** Car carnage comes to PSP

Details **Pub** Sierra | **Dev** Saber Interactive | **Genre** FPS

Lowdown The *FlatOut* series' tradition of brainless arcade racing and realistic physics continues in this handheld sequel, but with more new modes than ever. As well as regular races and destruction derbies, you can now enter Carnage Mode, a series of challenges that range from straight-up races to launching your driver through the windscreen and using him to knock down giant skittles.

ETA February



The Optimist*

Don't worry. Be happy

Decent frame-rate? Don't need one

Oh, stop crying. *PES 2008* slows down? Sob. *The Orange Box* is sometimes lurchier than the Addams' Family butler after a night on the Tia Maria? Blub. The most important thing of all is that these games came out in time for Konami and EA to sweep up the cash in the all-important Christmas market.

Cash flow

After all, Konami need the money to continue to put out all those essential PSP titles we all love so much – can you imagine living without *Ben 10*? I can't. And EA? They've hardly got any money, and need the pennies so we can enjoy yet another radically different *Madden/Tiger Woods/FIFA* next year.

And if a game slows down, why, that just gives your eye more time to see upcoming problems and act. Pack of baddies about to mow you down in *Half-Life 2*? You've got time to adjust your aim accordingly. *PES* slowing down while an opposition winger marauds down the touchline? Gives you the perfect chance to get in a crucial tackle. See?

So I say – more slowdown. Release *all* games that bit early. It's not like slowdown's going to affect sales of the next game in the series anyway – planning to skip *PES 2009* are you? No, thought not. So what difference does it make in the grand scheme of things if games have frame-rate problems? Squat. So you'd all better learn to love slowdown as much as I do, hadn't you?

EMAIL PSM3 @
Give us your slowdown thoughts...
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

*The thoughts of The Optimist do not necessarily reflect those of a normal, sane, person. Or PSM3.

15
ONE ORDINARY MAN

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DRAKE'S FORTUNE
PLAYSTATION 3
15
PLAYSTATION 3

Pub Konami | **Dev** Kojima Pro
Players 1 | **Genre** Stealth
FYI Solid Snake's final outing

ON THE DISC
[illegible]

"I describe the gameplay of *MGS4* as 'Wave form'. It's the number one thing I'm excited about"

***What* form play? Hideo Kojima waxes lyrical on his proudest invention as PSM3 goes hands-on with the most important game of 2008...**

THE PLAYSTATION 3 MAGAZINE
PSM3
MGS4
Cover Game

MGS4 feels different – and not just as a result of 'wave form' play, but more on that later. It isn't unrecognisable or broken but neither is it sublime, or intuitive. The buttons are *sort-of* the same, but sufficiently different to feel dislocating. Old flaws – like collision detection and camera wobble when crawling through tight gaps – remain, as do old thrills – like cruelly toying with guards using your variety of skills and weapons. We spent our first hour cursing the revamped CQC system and clumsily blasting past PMCs suspecting that we were 'doing it wrong', only to put the pad down three hours later with heavy hearts, after a thrilling last 30 minutes of finding new ways to baffle, torture and debase three guards in the demo's relatively tiny final section. It is, in short, a reflection of its producer, Hideo Kojima – an idiosyncratic, frustrating, flawed and endlessly entertaining kaleidoscope of comedy, invention and barbarity that entirely defies neat categorization. And as such, it's still on track to be the most important, and *exciting* game of 2008.

'Wave form' play? It's a fancy term for what we've

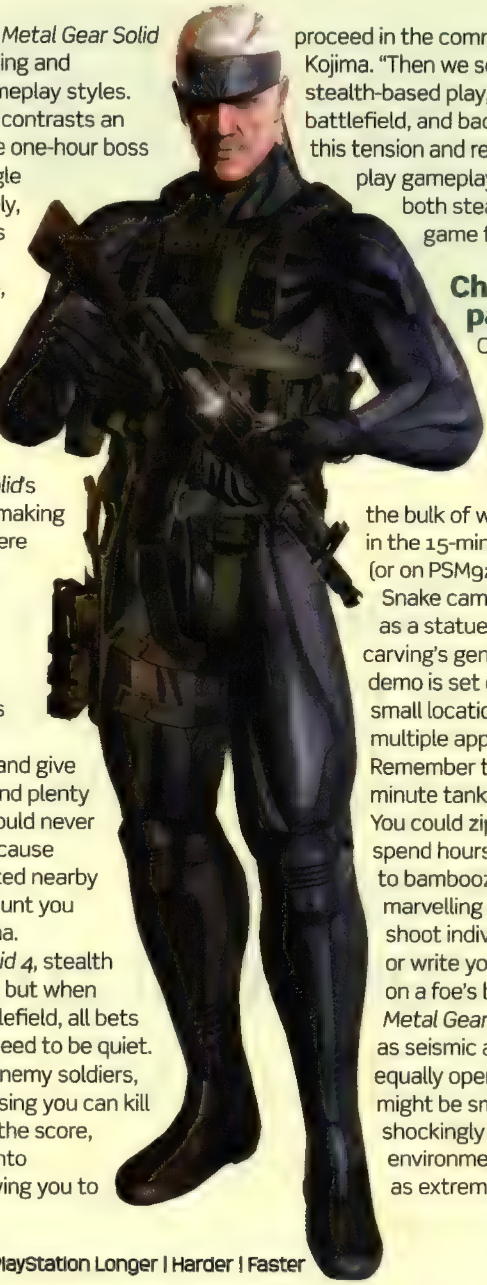
Metal Gear Solid 4

"An idiosyncratic, endlessly entertaining kaleidoscope of invention and barbarity"

"The are hundreds of textures in the game that Snake can have digitally manifested onto his OctoCamo suit"

Kojima Productions

> “Rumours that we have over 200 people working nonstop are totally exaggerated. We have 198 people working on the game nonstop.”
>
> **Kojima** Productions



always loved about *Metal Gear Solid* – the masterful pacing and juxtaposition of gameplay styles. *MGS3*, for example, contrasts an excruciatingly tense one-hour boss battle (The End jungle fight), with a leisurely, but certainly no less memorable, ten minute ladder climb, forcing you to reflect on the magnitude of your journey so far. 'Wave form' play attempts to solve *Metal Gear Solid*'s central dichotomy, making a 'stealth' game where combat is actively encouraged.

Warmonger

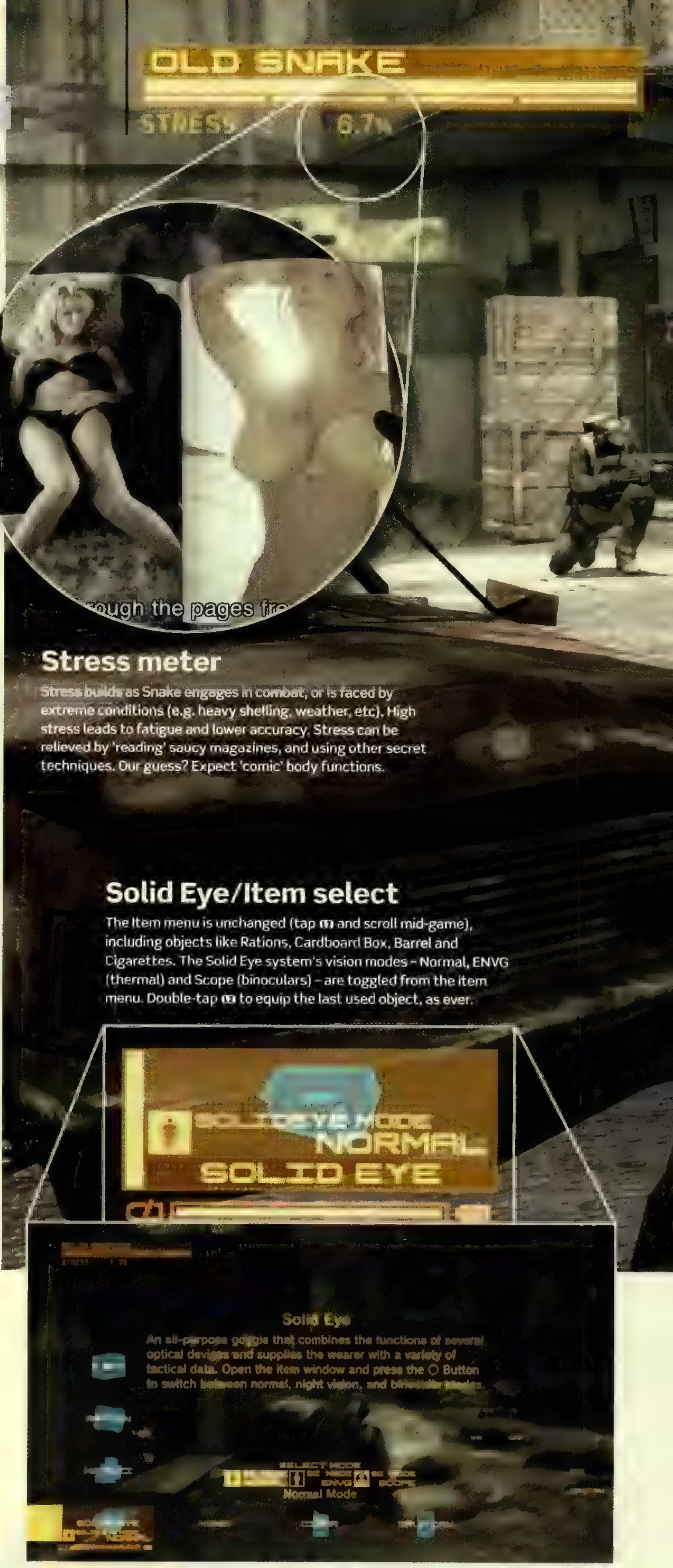
“The problem with previous games was that we throw you dozens of enemies and give you cool weapons and plenty of ammo, but you could never use your arsenal because weapon noises alerted nearby guards who would hunt you down,” reveals Kojima.

“In *Metal Gear Solid 4*, stealth remains at the core, but when Snake enters a battlefield, all bets are off. He doesn't need to be quiet. You can unload on enemy soldiers, or if the PMCs are losing you can kill local militia to even the score, sending the battle into stalemate and allowing you to proceed in the commotion,” expands Kojima. “Then we send Snake back to stealth-based play, then onto another battlefield, and back to stealth. It's this tension and release, wave form play gameplay that satisfies both stealth and action game fans.”

Choose your path

Our hands-on impressions are based on an extended version of the Tokyo Game Show code – the bulk of which can be seen in the 15-minute PS Store demo (or on PSM92's DVD), where Snake camouflages himself as a statue and holds another carving's genitals. While the demo is set over a relatively small location, there are multiple approaches. Remember the incredible 15-minute tanker demo for *MGS2*? You could zip through, or spend hours finding new ways to bamboozle guards, marvelling at your ability to shoot individual wine bottles or write your name in darts on a foe's buttocks. The *Metal Gear Solid 4* demo isn't as seismic a leap, but it's equally open-ended. Enemies might be smarter, but not shockingly so, while environmental damage isn't as extreme as once suggested – bullets leave direct scars in cement, and glass panes shatter, but we couldn't blow the scenery into chunks using the Patriot rocket launcher or RPG

Visually, it's impressive, but not staggering. Squint and pop into first-person view, and it's not dissimilar to the Middle East sections in *Call Of Duty 4*. In fact, playing *MGS4* in FPS mode feels initially disappointing, since a part of your brain thinks you're playing Infinity Ward's



Stress meter

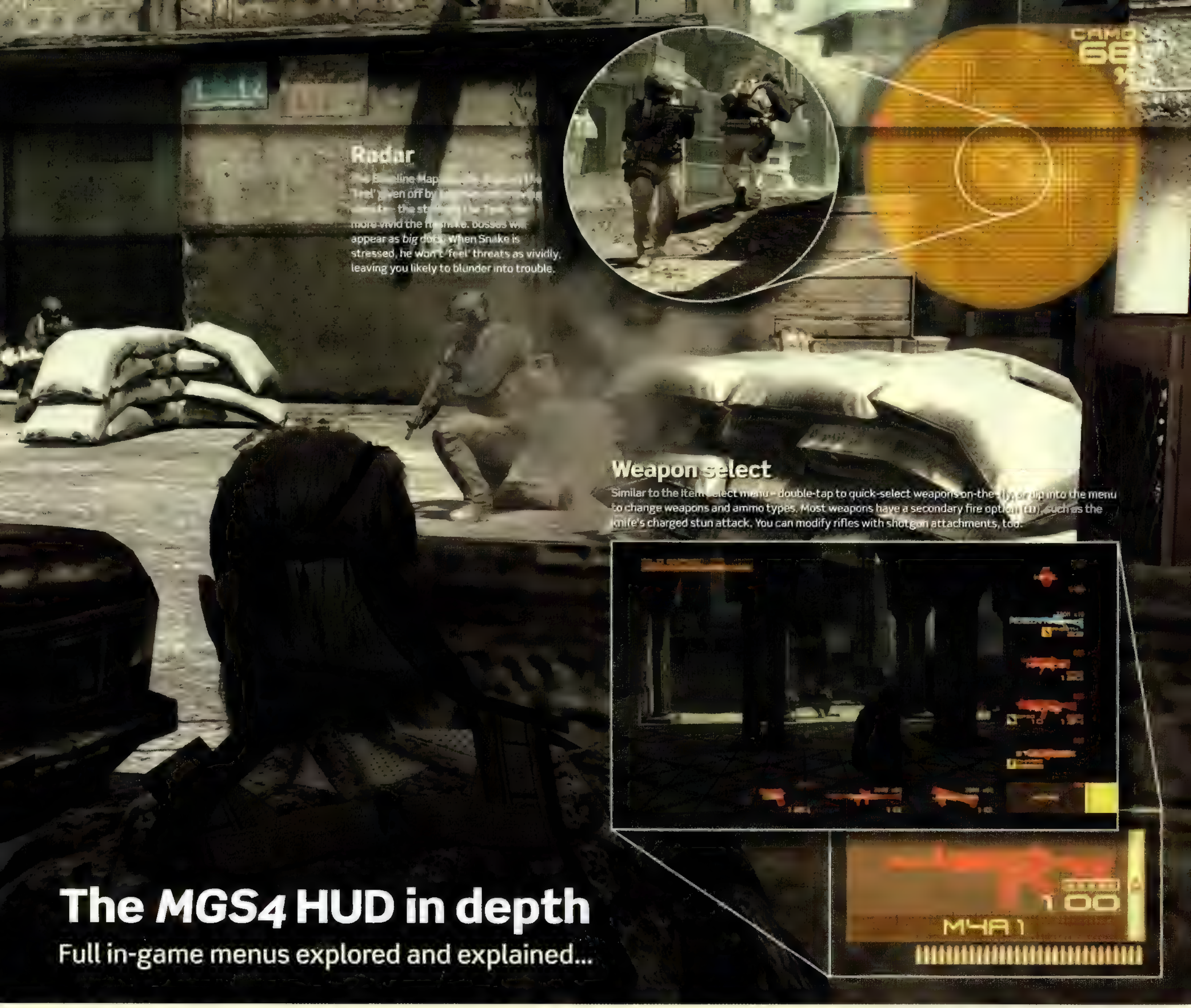
Stress builds as Snake engages in combat, or is faced by extreme conditions (e.g. heavy shelling, weather, etc). High stress leads to fatigue and lower accuracy. Stress can be relieved by 'reading' saucy magazines, and using other secret techniques. Our guess? Expect 'comic' body functions.

Solid Eye/Item select

The Item menu is unchanged (tap L2 and scroll mid-game), including objects like Rations, Cardboard Box, Barrel and Cigarettes. The Solid Eye system's vision modes – Normal, ENVG (thermal) and Scope (binoculars) – are toggled from the item menu. Double-tap L2 to equip the last used object, as ever.

Solid Eye

An all-purpose goggle that combines the functions of several optical devices and supplies the wearer with a variety of tactical data. Open the item window and press the ○ Button to switch between normal, night vision, and binocular modes.



Radar

The Baseline Map [illegible] 'feel' given off by [illegible] – the st[illegible] more vivid the [illegible]. Bosses will appear as *big dots*. When Snake is stressed, he won't 'feel' threats as vividly, leaving you likely to blunder into trouble.

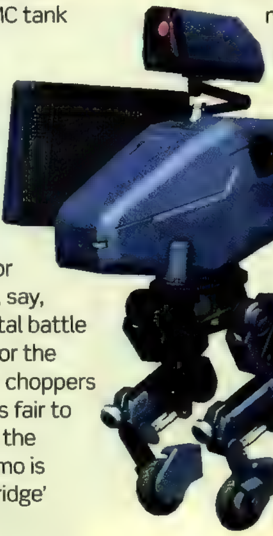
Weapon select

Similar to the Item select menu – double-tap to quick-select weapons on-the-fly, or dip into the menu to change weapons and ammo types. Most weapons have a secondary fire option (L1), such as the knife's charged stun attack. You can modify rifles with shotgun attachments, too.

The *MGS4* HUD in depth

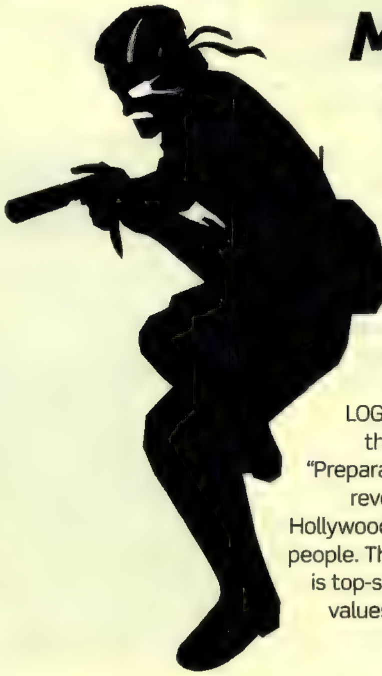
Full in-game menus explored and explained...

incredible shooter. Extended play soon erodes comparisons – *Metal Gear 4* is way more flexible – and the graphics gently dazzle: the volume of gunfire, explosions, soldiers and smoke in the final showdown with the PMC tank spikes your breath.



It isn't PS3's best-looking game, but the solidity and detail – zoom in and just *look* at Snake's grizzled face – is confidently reassuring. We're yet to fight a single boss, or endure a set piece like, say, the final white rose petal battle against Boss in *MGS3*, or the showdown against the choppers in the mountains, so it's fair to expect big surprises in the finished game. The demo is effectively one long 'bridge' section – a proof of concept – with no more significance than, for example, the first hour of jungle paths in *MGS3*.

Controls have been tweaked – initially confusing for *MGS* veterans, but potentially more inviting for first-timers. Hold L1 to aim and R1 to shoot, or tap △ while holding your gun to go into FPS mode. There's no sprint key, just standard analogue stick response. You tap ⊗ to crouch, and hold it to lie prone, removing the ridiculous triple-tap system of old where it was easy to prostrate yourself like a bullet sponge in face of incoming fire. △ performs all 'Action' functions, like hiking over rubble, or hiding behind cover, using context-sensitive on-screen icons. It's also used to 'absorb' scenery patterns with your Octo-



MGS4 ipod intro film

How the team behind the iPod ad will transform *Metal Gear 4*

MGS4's opening movie will be produced by US design house LOGAN – the agency responsible for the iconic iPod silhouette adverts. "Preparation took one-and-a-half years," reveals Kojima. "We spent a week in Hollywood working on it with a staff of 30 people. The movie's content and direction is top-secret, but if tops the production values of the Bond-aping *Snake Eater* intro, it'll be sensational.

How weapons work

Full item and weapon list – revealed

Weapons have five main attributes. Pop into the menu and you can pan and zoom around them in 3D – a nice cosmetic touch, but it allows you to quantify your modifcations, ranked from S-E (see right). Weapons like the RPG have 'S' ranks for Damage and Shockwave, but 'D' for reload speed.

DMG	C	Damage
SHK	D	Shockwave
PNT	B	Penetration
STB	D	Stability
RLD	D	Reload

GSR .45 PISTOL
.45 pistol
8 rounds

STUN KNIFE

JAVELIN
rocket launcher
1 round

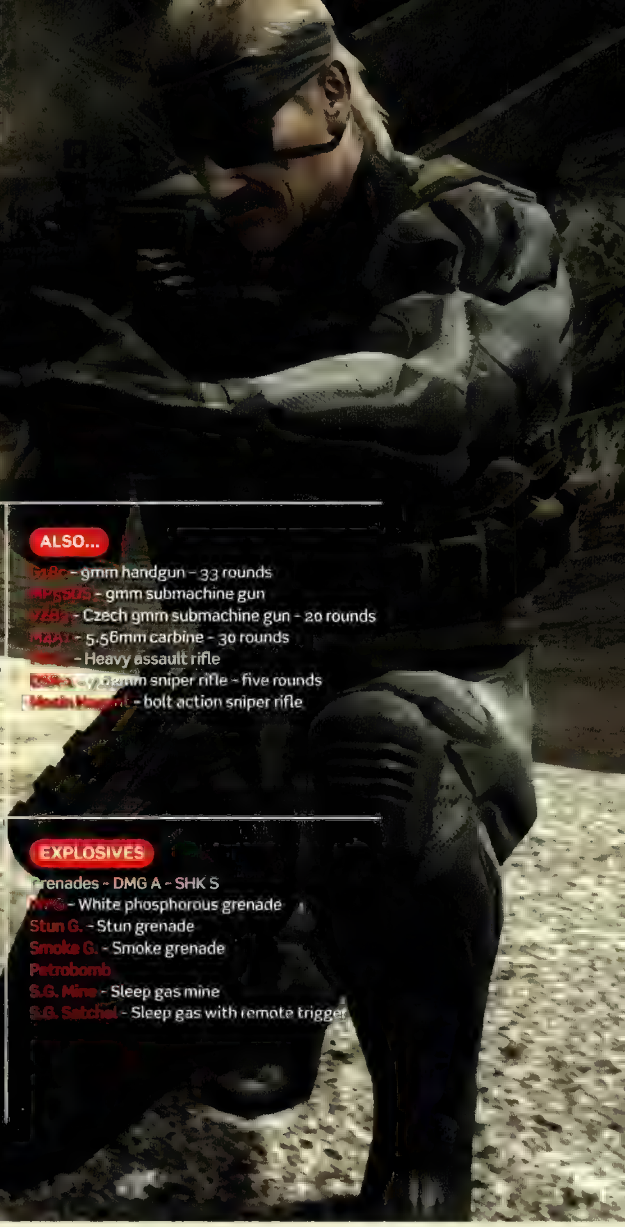
P90
5.7mm submachinegun
50 rounds

AKLOZ
5.56mm assault rifle
30 rounds

M1 4EBR
Auto sniper rifle
20 rounds

M870
Custom shotgun - 4(+1) rounds
OG Buck, Slug or V.Ring ammo
24 rounds each

M60E4
7.62mm machine gun
100 rounds

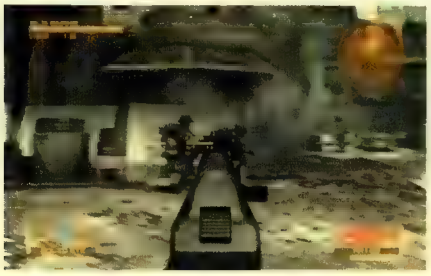


ALSO...

G18c - 9mm handgun - 33 rounds
MP5SD5 - 9mm submachine gun
VZ83 - Czech 9mm submachine gun - 20 rounds
M4A1 - 5.56mm carbine - 30 rounds
[illegible] - Heavy assault rifle
DSR-1 - 7.62mm sniper rifle - five rounds
Mosin Nagant - bolt action sniper rifle

EXPLOSIVES

Grenades - DMG A - SHK S
WPG - White phosphorous grenade
Stun G. - Stun grenade
Smoke G. - Smoke grenade
Petrobomb
S.G. Mine - Sleep gas mine
S.G. Satchel - Sleep gas with remote trigger



First among sequels: The FPS mode currently feels a little incongruous, but makes intense battles more intuitive.

> "The ending will be epic. People will talk about it for years to come"

Kojima Productions

camo suit, increasing your camouflage percentage. Otherwise, it's largely as you've seen in the Network demo, with Sixaxis-controlled bin lid opening and barrel rolling over guards among the new features. The remote-controlled Mk II robot handles as you'd expect, but has a handy 'stealth' mode, with a clear, wobbly outline like the Predator's wavy camouflage.

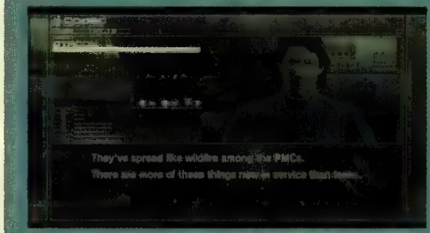
Do it your way

It isn't your skills, but their *applications* that enthrall. On one occasion, we tried to barrel roll down a multiple set of steps over incoming militia – getting comically stuck in a corner, before steamrolling our foes in a milkshake splat of blood and sick. It's darkly comic, too. Lobbing a phosphorus

New Codec revealed

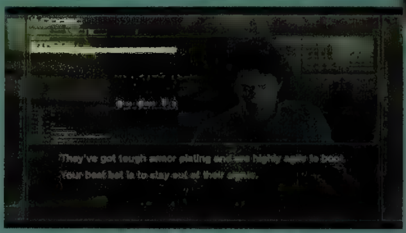
Don't worry – now you can Fwd the waffle

[illegible]



They've spread like wildfire among the PMCs.
There are more of these things now in service than [illegible]

Ota load of waffle: [illegible]

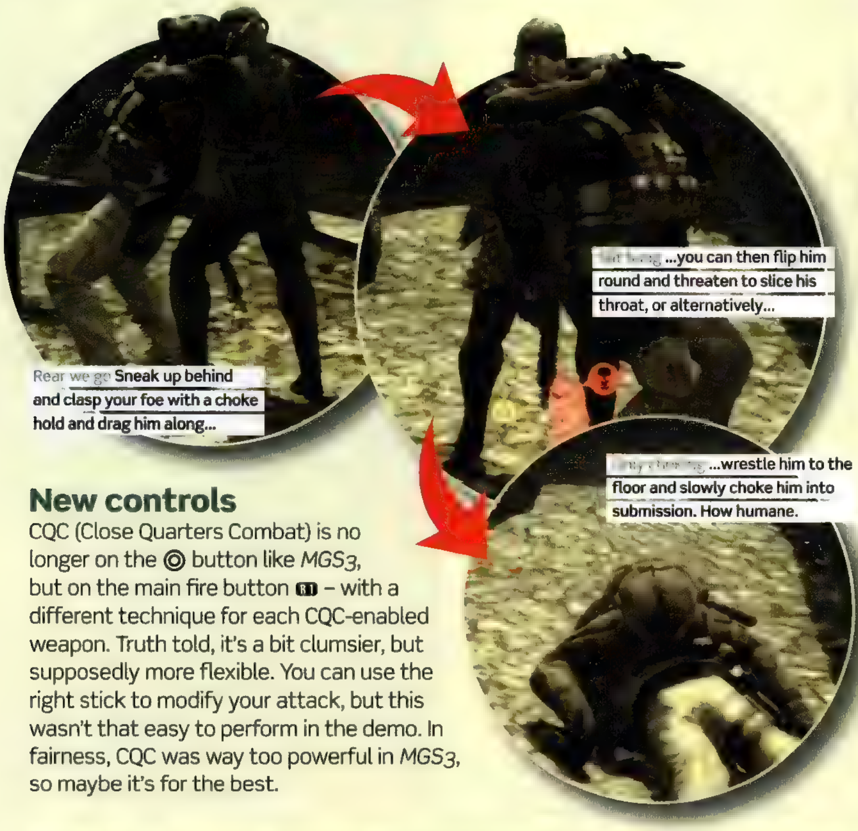


They've got tough armor plating and are highly agile to boot.
Your best bet is to stay out of their sight.

Hal to the king: [illegible]

All-new CQC moves

Close Quarters Combat has evolved...



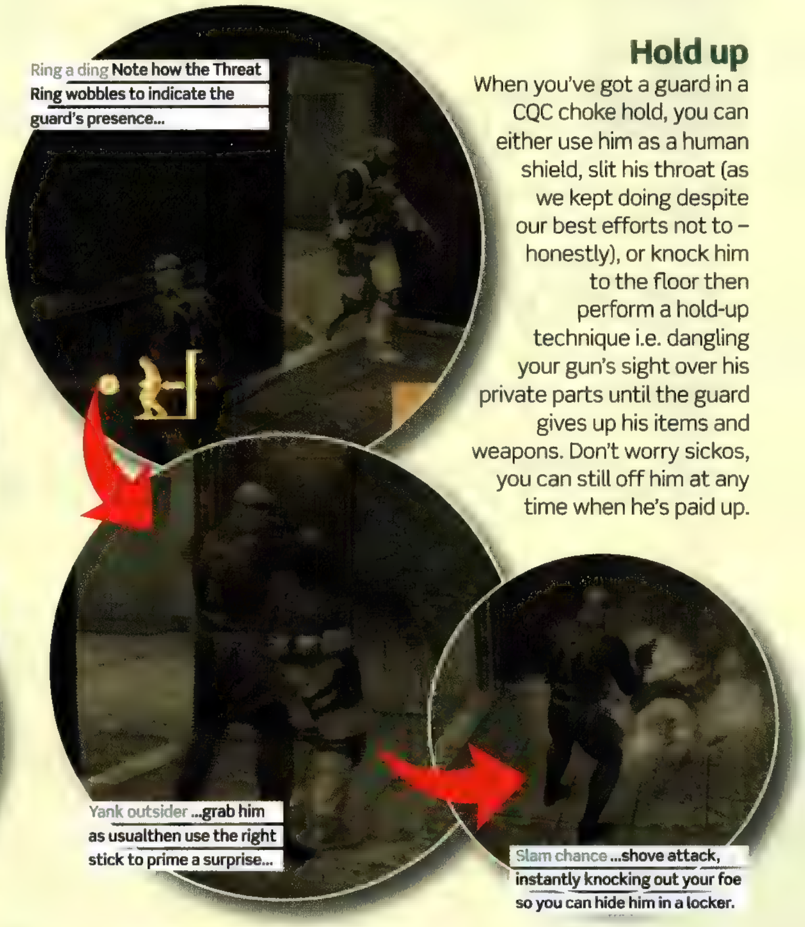
Rear we go Sneak up behind and clasp your foe with a choke hold and drag him along...

[illegible] ...you can then flip him round and threaten to slice his throat, or alternatively...

[illegible] ...wrestle him to the floor and slowly choke him into submission. How humane.

New controls

CQC (Close Quarters Combat) is no longer on the ◎ button like *MGS3*, but on the main fire button R1 – with a different technique for each CQC-enabled weapon. Truth told, it's a bit clumsier, but supposedly more flexible. You can use the right stick to modify your attack, but this wasn't that easy to perform in the demo. In fairness, CQC was way too powerful in *MGS3*, so maybe it's for the best.



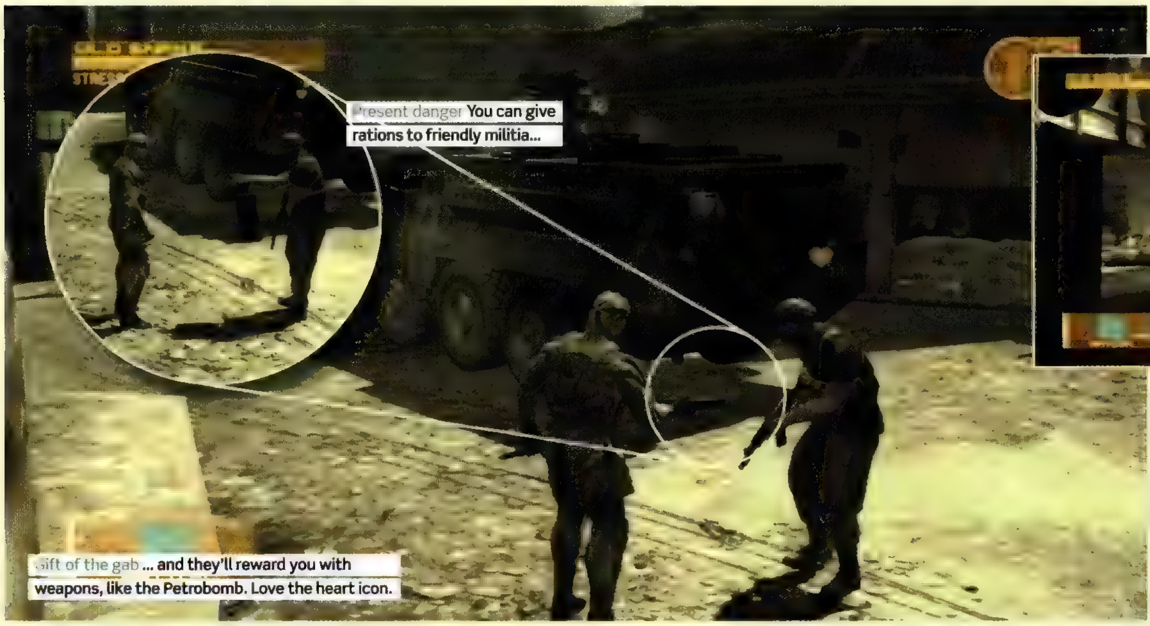
Ring a ding Note how the Threat Ring wobbles to indicate the guard's presence...

Yank outsider ...grab him as usualthen use the right stick to prime a surprise...

Slam chance ...shove attack, instantly knocking out your foe so you can hide him in a locker.

Hold up

When you've got a guard in a CQC choke hold, you can either use him as a human shield, slit his throat (as we kept doing despite our best efforts not to – honestly), or knock him to the floor then perform a hold-up technique i.e. dangling your gun's sight over his private parts until the guard gives up his items and weapons. Don't worry sickos, you can still off him at any time when he's paid up.



Present danger You can give rations to friendly militia...

Gift of the gab ... and they'll reward you with weapons, like the Petrobomb. Love the heart icon.

Aim free You can flip between aiming over the left or right shoulder – useful depending on your cover.

grenade directly onto an enemy's head causes him to scream while frantically patting at his clothes. You can roll grenades, too, by aiming them at the floor, or bounce them off walls. "What's a robot doing on the battlefield?" quizzes one militia, before you use the MKII's (Snake's tiny mobile robot) extendable arm to electrocute his buttocks, frying him as long as you please. The Mk. II can flip switches too – a hint at gameplay to come.

With extended play, we were able to place sexy magazines (called 'MG Gal' and 'guaranteed to arouse the interest of males age 12 to 80', though there's no new pictures save what you've seen in the PSN demo), and lure guards by tapping walls. Better yet, plant a Sleeping Gas Satchel behind a nearby wall, and you can remote detonate it as the guard(s) leans in to 'read' the sexy magazine. Careful, mind – you can gas yourself, forcing you to lie prone for minutes. At the end of the demo, we were gassing guards for fun, retreating to a safe location, and firing a precision RPG rocket between their trousers – leaving a blackened corpse with legs at near-180° angles. Ugh.

Gun and dusted

The weapons are brilliant (see How Weapons Work), with dramatic differences between, say, the GSR .45mm pistol, and the M60E4 7.62mm machine gun. If anything, it's a little too easy to mow down guards (they only need a shot or two to the

"*MGS4* marks the first time we have had to build multiple environments totally different from the next. Middle East is the first, South America is the second"

Kojima Productions

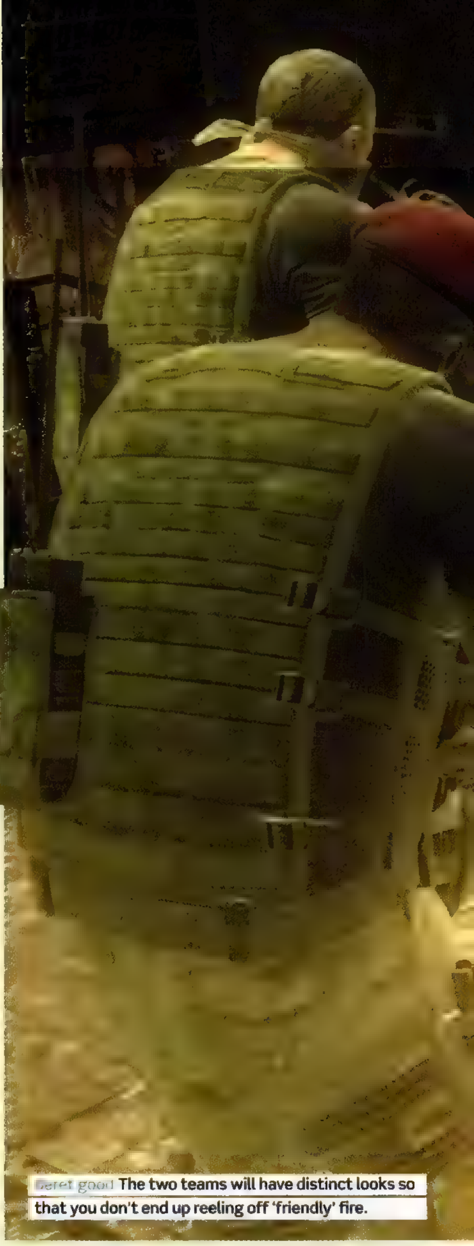
face), reducing the need for stealth. That said, we suspect that's because the demo has *every* weapon unlocked, as opposed to a stun knife and pistol. Make no mistake: you're in deep trouble if you trip the alert and take on three armed guards with a USP.

You can't steal PMC (Private Military Contractor) weapons, since they're ID tagged, but clumsier militia weapons like the AK47 can be plundered and customised by arms dealer Drebin. Others, like the M870 shotgun, have multiple ammunition types (tap ◎ on the menu select screen to rotate), including OG Buck (for a wider range), Slugs (for power) and V.Rings (rubber bullets for silent knock outs, a bit like *Splinter Cell*). Only PMC troops use the SOP nanomachine communication system hinted at by Meryl in the last trailer, too.

Tanks very much

Our hands-on ends at the same place as the PSN footage, with Snake using a Patriot missile to take down a tank, and befriending the local militia ("So you're on our side now?" they whoop). You can even offer rations to friendly troops in exchange for ammo or other items. Intriguingly, when you retreat from the street to the militia safe house, the demo ends with a familiar cut-scene: the bit from the Tokyo Game Show trailer where Snake is confronted by rookie Akiba. Snake humiliates him with CQC (Close Quarters Combat), before Meryl and the Foxhound team appear. "CQC... so you're a real Big Boss, huh?", queries Meryl, initially failing to recognize Snake. He explains his appearance is due to accelerated ageing but 'doesn't know why'. The demo ends with Akiba suffering stomach cramps, setting up the bizarre diarrhoea scene that you saw at the end of the TGS trailer.

The plot's too mental to describe or speculate about here (see PSM92 for more), but we suspect a twist to rival playing as Raiden in *MGS2*. The in-game HUD curiously refers to *Old* Snake (not Solid Snake), perhaps suggesting you play as a different Snake clone. Could it be *MGS3*'s hero Big Boss? He was supposed to be dead, but if he was reanimated it would explain Snake's aged appearance, and add further depth to the reappearance of former lover Eva in *MGS4*. That said, Old Snake does have both eyes (Big Boss loses one of his in *MGS3*) and, er, the Mk. II scans Old Snake and displays his code name as


[illegible] good The two teams will have distinct looks so that you don't end up reeling off 'friendly' fire.

Info-blast

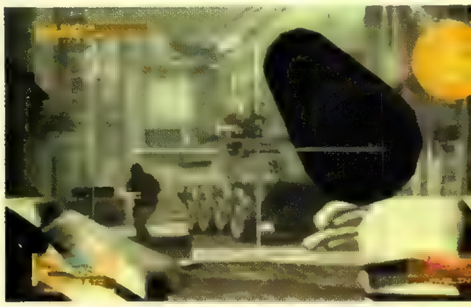
PSM3 digs deeper...

Threat ring › Waves
The dotted white line around Snake shows the presence, direction and level of threats. Waves relay the direction of the threat – the higher, the more dangerous. Red waves mean bigger danger, like a tank.

PMCs › Explained
These are the bad guys and part of Liquid's army. You can't team up or trade with them, unlike the local militia. There will be different militia and PMCs in each country.

Blu-ray › Hidden problem
Most games compress their audio to MP3 or a smaller formats, but *MGS4*'s files are uncompressed. In fact, they're so 'clean' you can hear every imperfection, including mouth clicks, forcing the developers to capture 'perfect' takes. The script has been pruned for obvious Japanese to English translation bloopers, but there'll lots of obvious nods to old games.

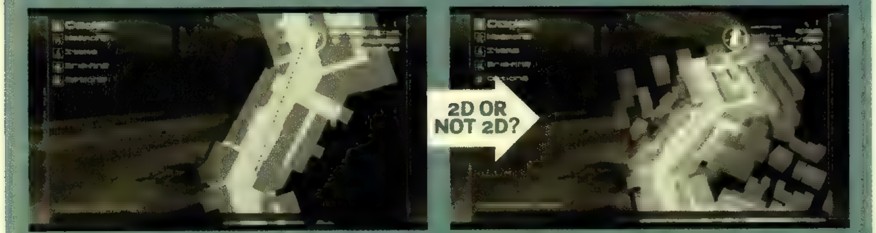
Philosophy › Liberal
There's lots of barely disguised political moralising. Otacon describes how most PMCs are 'young kids from poor backgrounds. I can't condemn them'. He mentions the PMCs in the demo are UK-funded, but blames the rise of PMCs on the Iraq War, where the US funded them to fight.


Big shell Note the depth of field effect as Snake fires the Javelin rocket – and the detail of the flying shell casing.

2D or not 2D? That is...

MGS4's all-new 3D map revealed

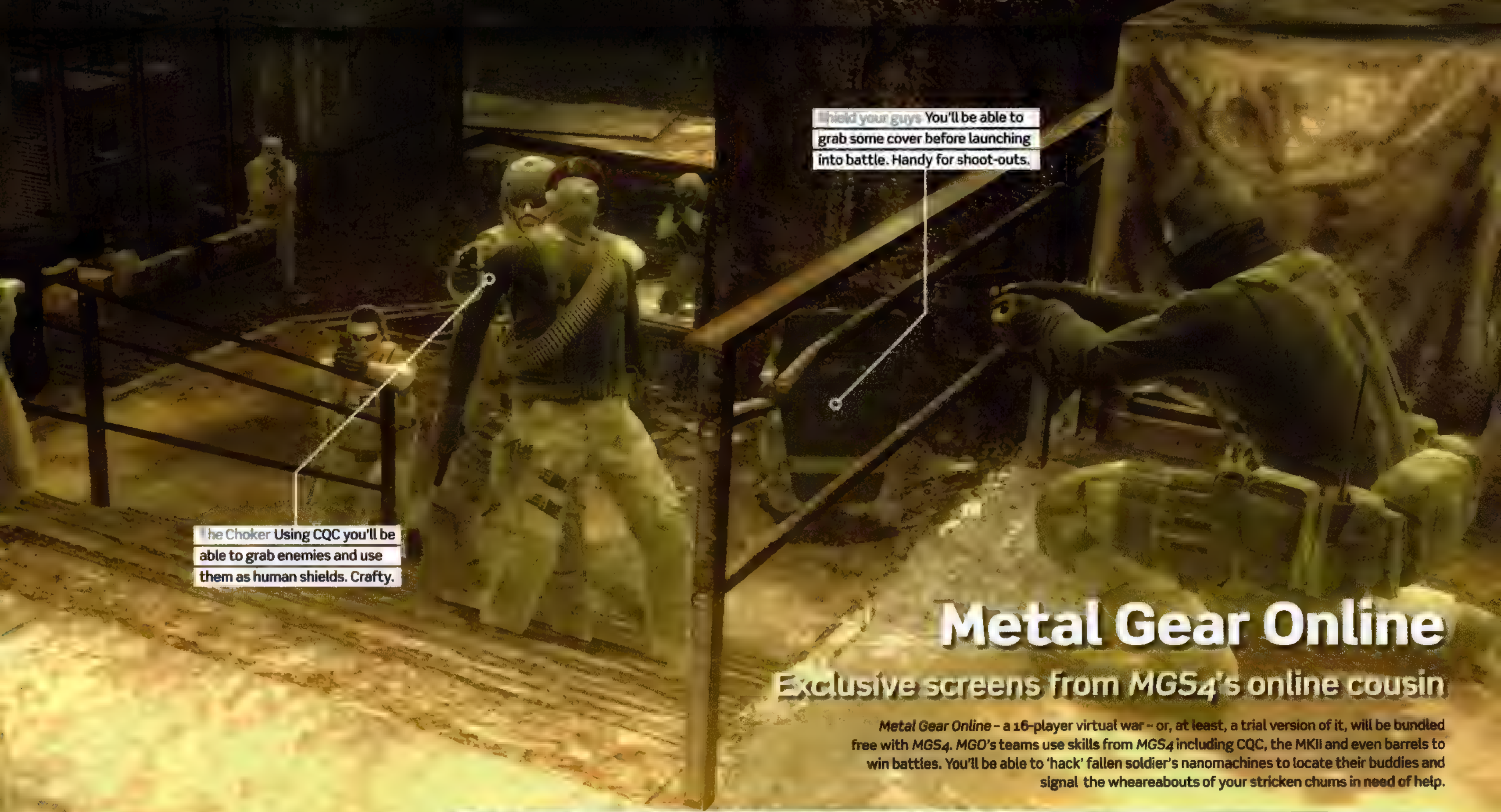
[illegible]



Line of sight: [illegible]

House of pan: [illegible]

"You can't help thinking that it might be the greatest game of all time"



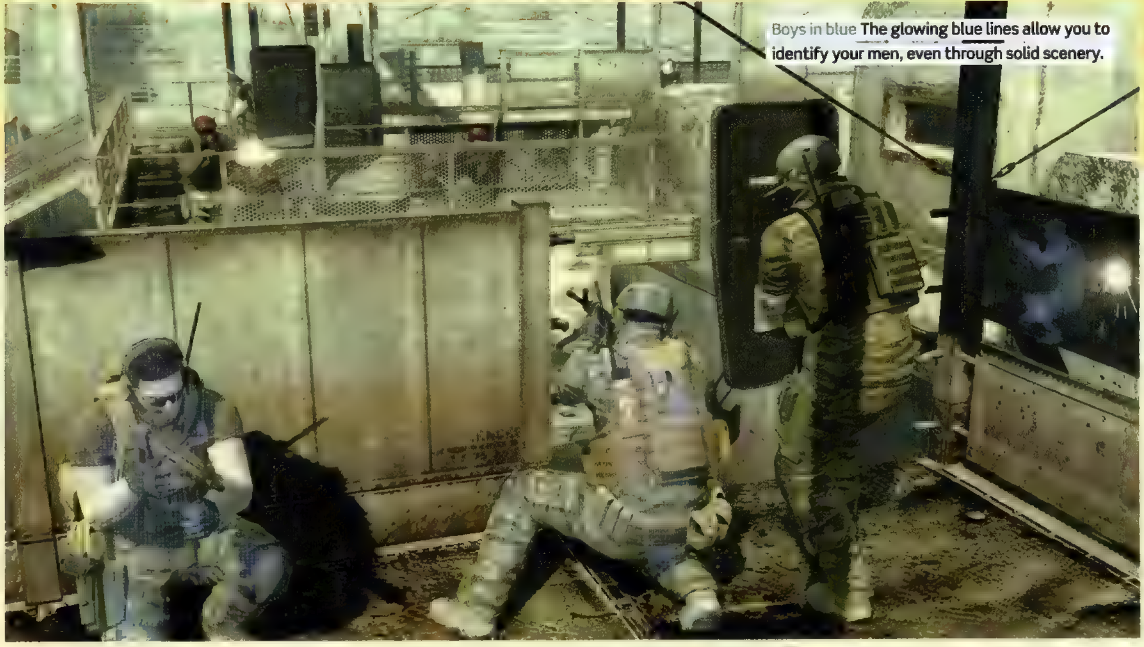
Shield your guys You'll be able to grab some cover before launching into battle. Handy for shoot-outs.

The Choker Using CQC you'll be able to grab enemies and use them as human shields. Crafty.

Metal Gear Online

Exclusive screens from MGS4's online cousin

Metal Gear Online – a 16-player virtual war – or, at least, a trial version of it, will be bundled free with *MGS4*. *MGO's* teams use skills from *MGS4* including CQC, the MKII and even barrels to win battles. You'll be able to 'hack' fallen soldier's nanomachines to locate their buddies and signal the wheareabouts of your stricken chums in need of help.



Boys in blue The glowing blue lines allow you to identify your men, even through solid scenery.

'Solid'. Or you might play as 'Old' and 'Young' versions of Solid Snake – explaining the mysterious youthful Snake at the end of the TGS 2006 trailer. How? Either Old Snake finds a cure for the ageing, or the game's set over two time periods.

Every *Metal Gear* to date has been set in one location (Alaska, New York, Russia, Columbia), but *MGS4* is the first with multiple environments, each different from the next. "Middle East is the first, South America is the second," confirms Koijma, vindicating eagle-eyed fans who'd spotted South American building structures in the previous trailer, where Vamp scraps with Raiden. We've heard there'll be five main locations, two confirmed, plus – our informed guess – Shadow Moses (spotted in the last trailer where Liquid and Solid scrap in Metal Gear Rex and Ray), Eastern Europe and, *surely*, Outer Heaven, the soldier's paradise long envisaged by Big Boss. "The last location is a place you've been waiting to visit for 20 years," teases Kojima Production's Ryan Payton, doing little to deflect speculation.

Is this the end?

One thing is sure: the series is going out with a bang. "The ending will be epic. People will talk about it for years to come," assure Kojima Productions. Will Snake die? Don't know – but we suspect a *version* of Snake will die, and, frankly, we've stopped taking bets on Ninja Raiden dying tragically while protecting Snake, hence cementing his hero status for all time. *Metal Gear Solid 4* is mired in identity crises all round – from its lead character, to the controls, to the impossibility of pigeon holing it in any particular genre. But, *despite* it all, you can't help thinking it might be the greatest game of all time for the same reasons, the rarest of beasts: a game you can't predict, or dare to emulate. Playing the demo leaves you with the same feeling as brushing past a stranger who looks like an old friend – without saying a word, you're ready to embrace them. Our hands-on impressions represent a translucent scalpel slice of *Metal Gear Solid 4*'s wider menu – but the ingredients are tasty enough to convince you that the remaining courses will tantalize, surprise and satisfy like never before. 'Q2 2008' – that's July in our book – can't come soon enough.

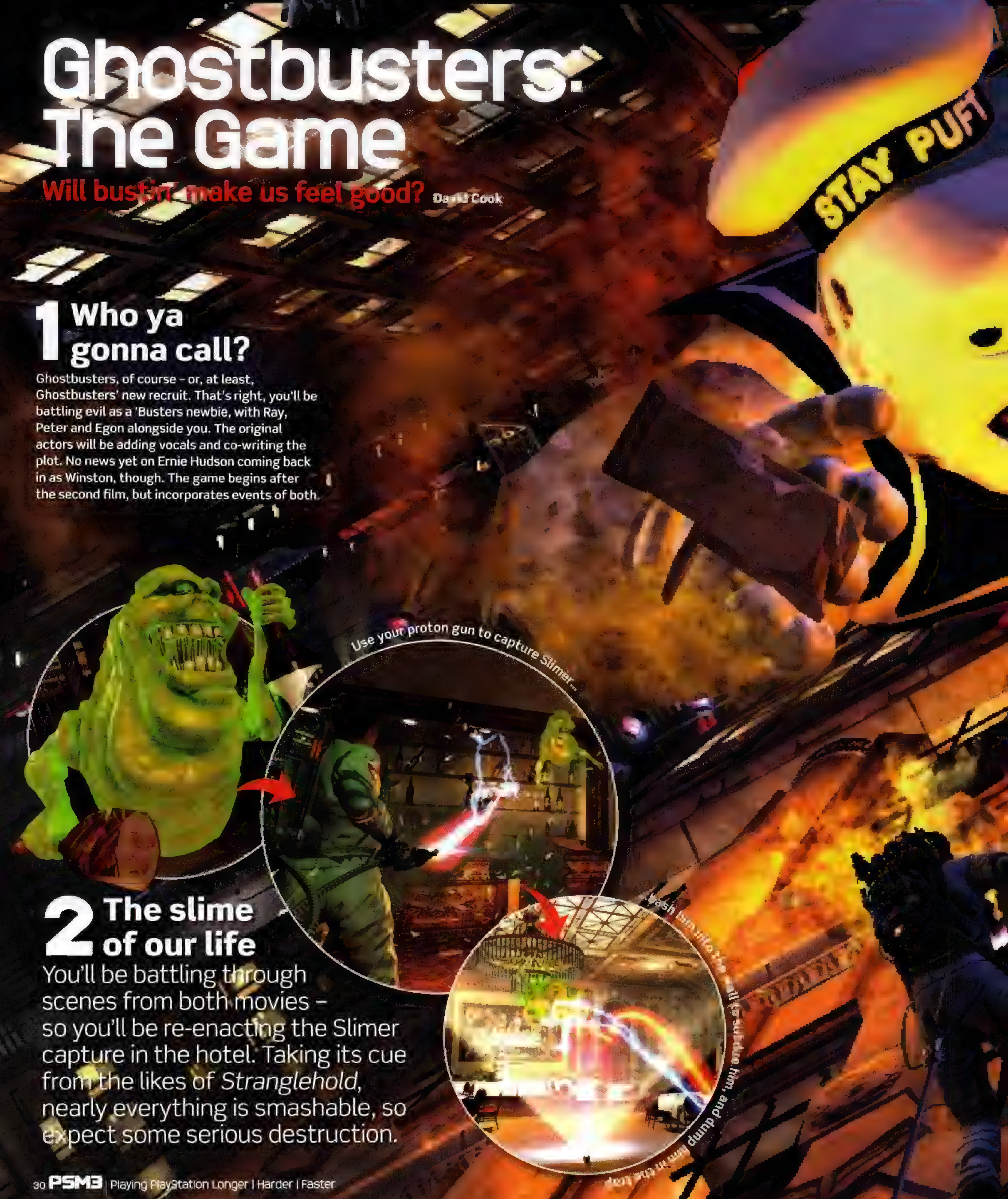
Pub Sierra | **Dev** Terminal Reality
Players 1 | **Genre** Action
FYI The game of the childhood-defining flick

ON THE DISC
Ghostbusters will be on the disc ASAP

Ghostbusters: The Game

Will bustin' make us feel good?

David Cook



Use your proton gun to capture Slimer...

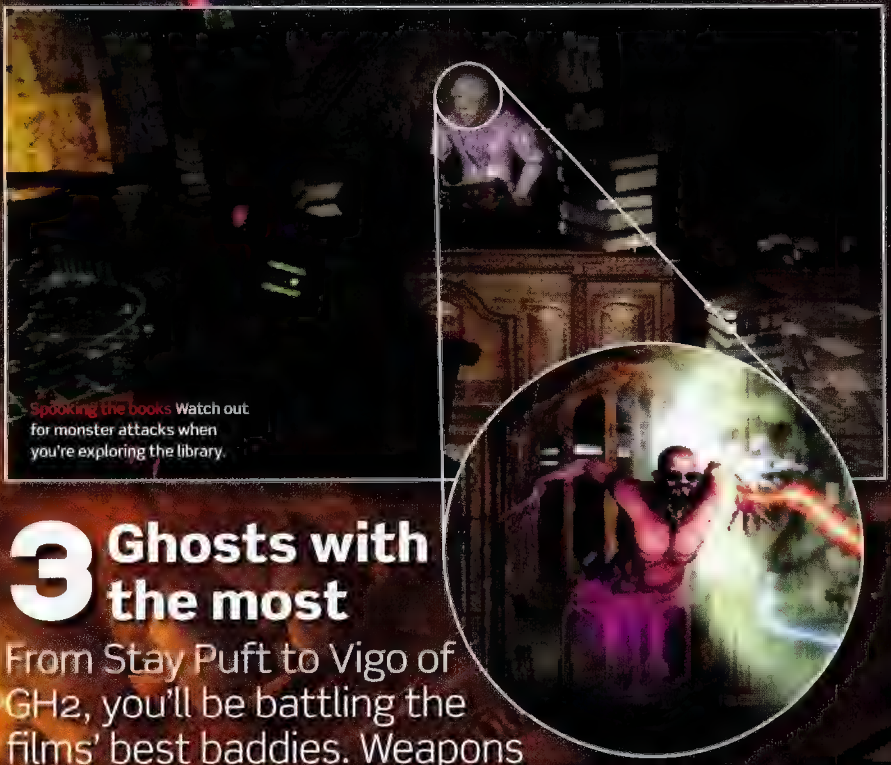
...smash him into the wall to subdue him, and dump him in the trap

1 Who ya gonna call?

Ghostbusters, of course – or, at least, Ghostbusters' new recruit. That's right, you'll be battling evil as a 'Busters newbie, with Ray, Peter and Egon alongside you. The original actors will be adding vocals and co-writing the plot. No news yet on Ernie Hudson coming back in as Winston, though. The game begins after the second film, but incorporates events of both.

2 The slime of our life

You'll be battling through scenes from both movies – so you'll be re-enacting the Slimer capture in the hotel. Taking its cue from the likes of *Stranglehold*, nearly everything is smashable, so expect some serious destruction.



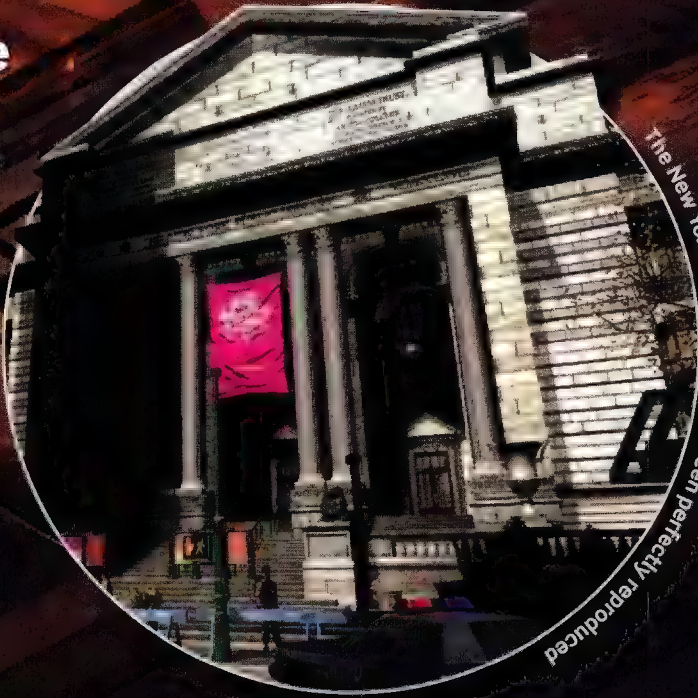
Spooking the books Watch out for monster attacks when you're exploring the library.

3 Ghosts with the most

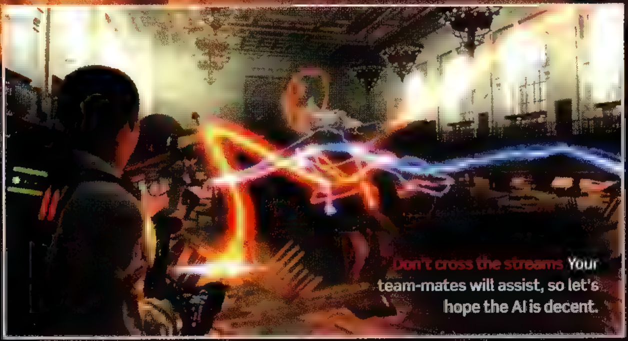
From Stay Puft to Vigo of GH2, you'll be battling the films' best baddies. Weapons include Proton Guns and the Tether Gun, which binds baddies together with trails of ectoplasm.

4 Touring the Big Apple

Classic locations abound – Ghostbusters HQ, The Sedgewick Hotel, Dana's block of flats, the library... you name it, it'll be there. The environments look lovely so far, too, as bold and impactful as the movies. But will we get to climb aboard the Statue Of Liberty and stomp down the streets of New York?



The New York Public Library has been perfectly reproduced



Don't cross the streams Your team-mates will assist, so let's hope the AI is decent.

5 Team tactics

You can't command your team-mates, a la *GRAW2*. They're AI-controlled, for better or for worse.

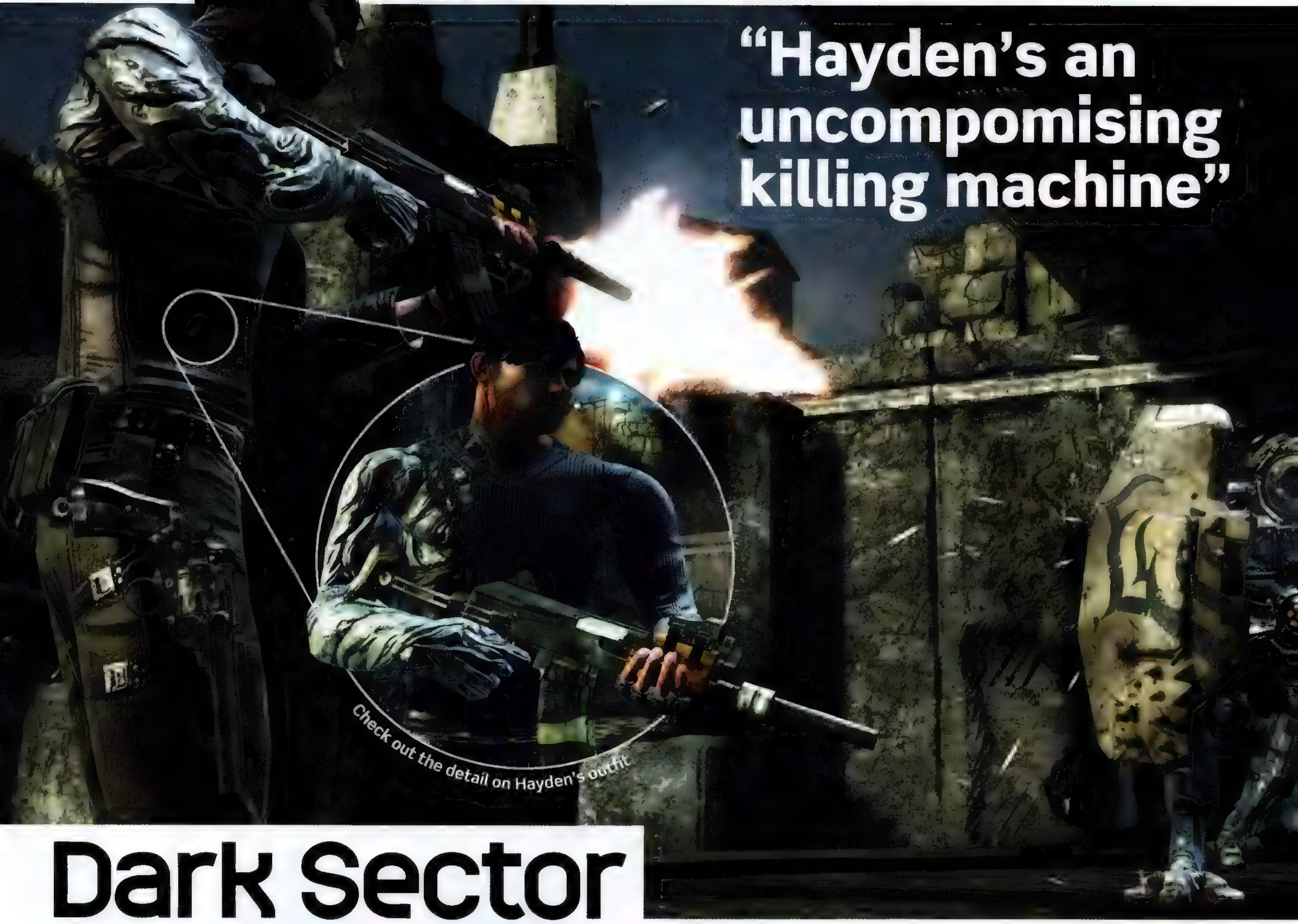
PSM3 Reckons

If this is a let-down, it'll be the biggest disappointment since *Transformers*. But it looks decent, and it's early days yet. More soon.

ETA
MID 2007

Pub D3 Publishers | **Dev** Digital Extremes
Players 1 | **Genre** Action
FYI Crosses Jason Bourne with *Resi 4*

ON THE DISC
See Dark Sector on this month's disc



“Hayden's an uncompomising killing machine”

Dark Sector

Shedding light on one of PS3's grittiest games

Nathan Irvine

The surprise isn't that developer Digital Extreme's action thriller is a *Resi 4* rip-off – after all, they've made a career of 'borrowing' from other games, most notably *Pariah* on Xbox, a blatant *Halo* clone – but that *Dark Sector* looks so polished, despite being wonky at best only six months earlier. Even the plot feels familar: Lead man Hayden Tenno (a dead ringer for Leon) blasts and hacks his way through the fictional eastern European city of Lasria. Then there's the mysterious Technocytes disease killing off the locals, which you can liken to *Resi*'s T-Virus. But if *Dark Sector* manages to deliver half the thrills of its mentor then we're in for a treat.

Making Hayden

As it stands, it's a seriously promising game. The version we're playing now might contain more bugs than a bushtucker trial (like a chair becoming glued to us as we ran) but these should be sorted before it hits the shelves. Hayden's an uncompromising killing machine. We're introduced to him in a grimy warehouse at the beginning of the game, which – to start with – is played out in near-black and white.

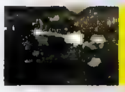
Hayden feels like a strong, solid character, and when he runs the camera jiggles around as if he's being chased by a camera crew. His 'mark' – we're told via a cut-scene – is a hostage deep inside the dilapidated building by a gang of terrorists – one of which is advancing on Hayden's position. Hunkering down behind a table until his enemy's close enough to be taken out with his pistol, Hayden springs up. That familiar *Resi 4* camera angle locks into place, and a shot lands square in his chest with an eruption of blood that looks like an exploding jam jar. Ouch. It's just one example of *Dark Sector*'s disturbing level of detail. From claret-splashing gunshot wounds to vicious assaults with the razor-sharp glaive (more on that later), it's certainly a bloodbath.

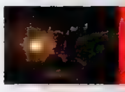
RIVALS

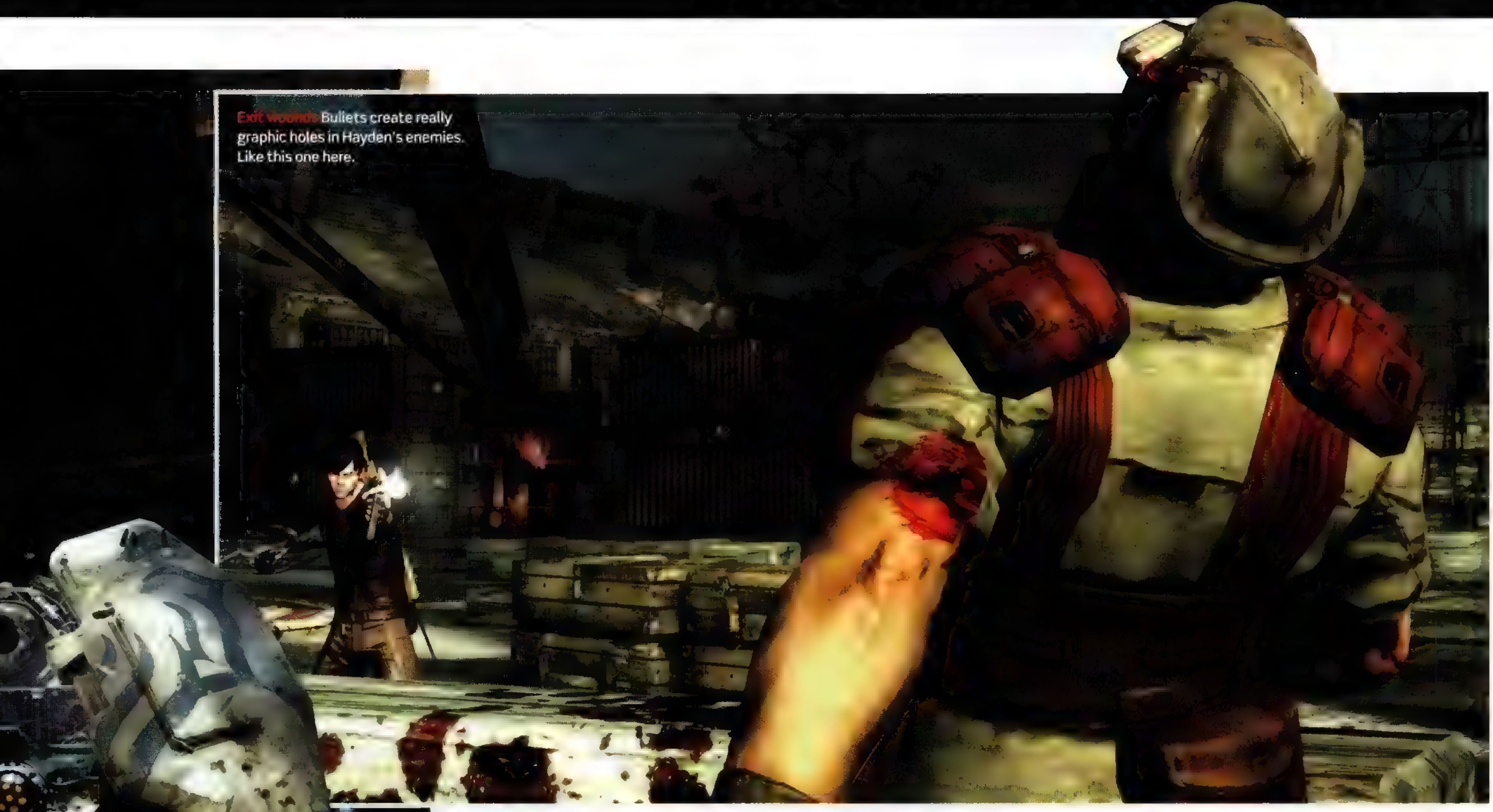
The PS3 shooter race

Resident Evil 5
USP Sequel to [illegible] best videogames ever.
[illegible]

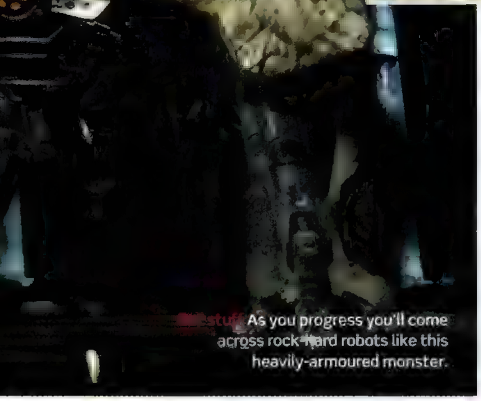
Haze
USP [illegible] the hype? Review next issue.
January


Dark Sector
USP This really could be the first great game of 2008.
January

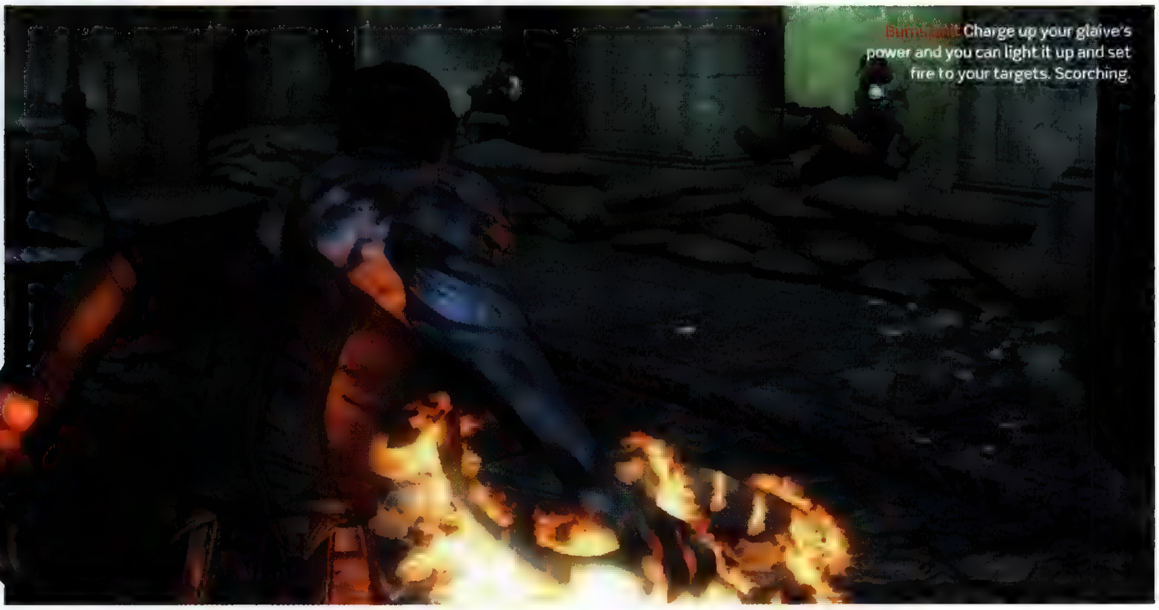

Killzone 2
USP Sony's [illegible] set for big things next year.
[illegible]



Exit wounds Bullets create really graphic holes in Hayden's enemies. Like this one here.



[illegible] stuff As you progress you'll come across rock-hard robots like this heavily-armoured monster.



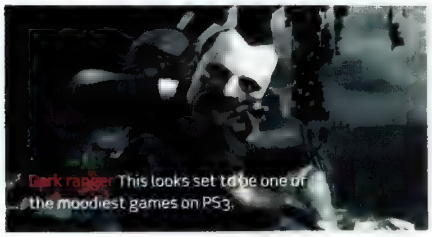
Burns unit Charge up your glaive's power and you can light it up and set fire to your targets. Scorching.

Hayden doesn't just blast generic, boring grunts, either. In the later stages of the game he's up against an assault chopper, which he has to knock out with an RPG launcher. Shortly afterwards, he's stared down by a screen-filling colossus, a genetic beast that's obviously the result of said virus and desperate to murder all in its path.

In full colour

By this point *Dark Sector* is blistering with colour. After Hayden is infected with the virus by a mysterious man, the game ditches its moody black and white visuals for a stylish bleed of colours – this symbolises his body becoming ravaged with the disease. It's not all bad though, because the blast of colour also introduces our favourite weapon – the glaive. This boomerang-like projectile blade will slice into an enemy and drop him quickly. You can even combine your glaive with gunfire to really put your foe to rest, or just get in close and gut a troop from behind. As you progress the glaive is given tweaks to make it even more powerful – like being able to electrocute enemies. You can even set explosive charges to blow up on contact – perfect for taking out a large group of enemies.

If *Dark Sector* can maintain its early promise then we could be in for something special. We just pray it doesn't morph into a one-dimensional shooter/slasher as it progresses. Review next month.



Dark ragger This looks set to be one of the moodiest games on PS3.

PSM3 Reckons

It's showing great potential, and we certainly like the *Resi 4* feel it oozes. So long as there's enough variety, it could be a surprise hit.

ETA
JAN
2008

Pub Eidos | **Dev** Pivotal
Players 1 | **Genre** Action
FYI Classic war game goes FPS

ON THE DISC
When Eidos release Conflict footage, we'll have it

Conflict: Denied Ops

Classic war series in dubious change

Andy Kelly

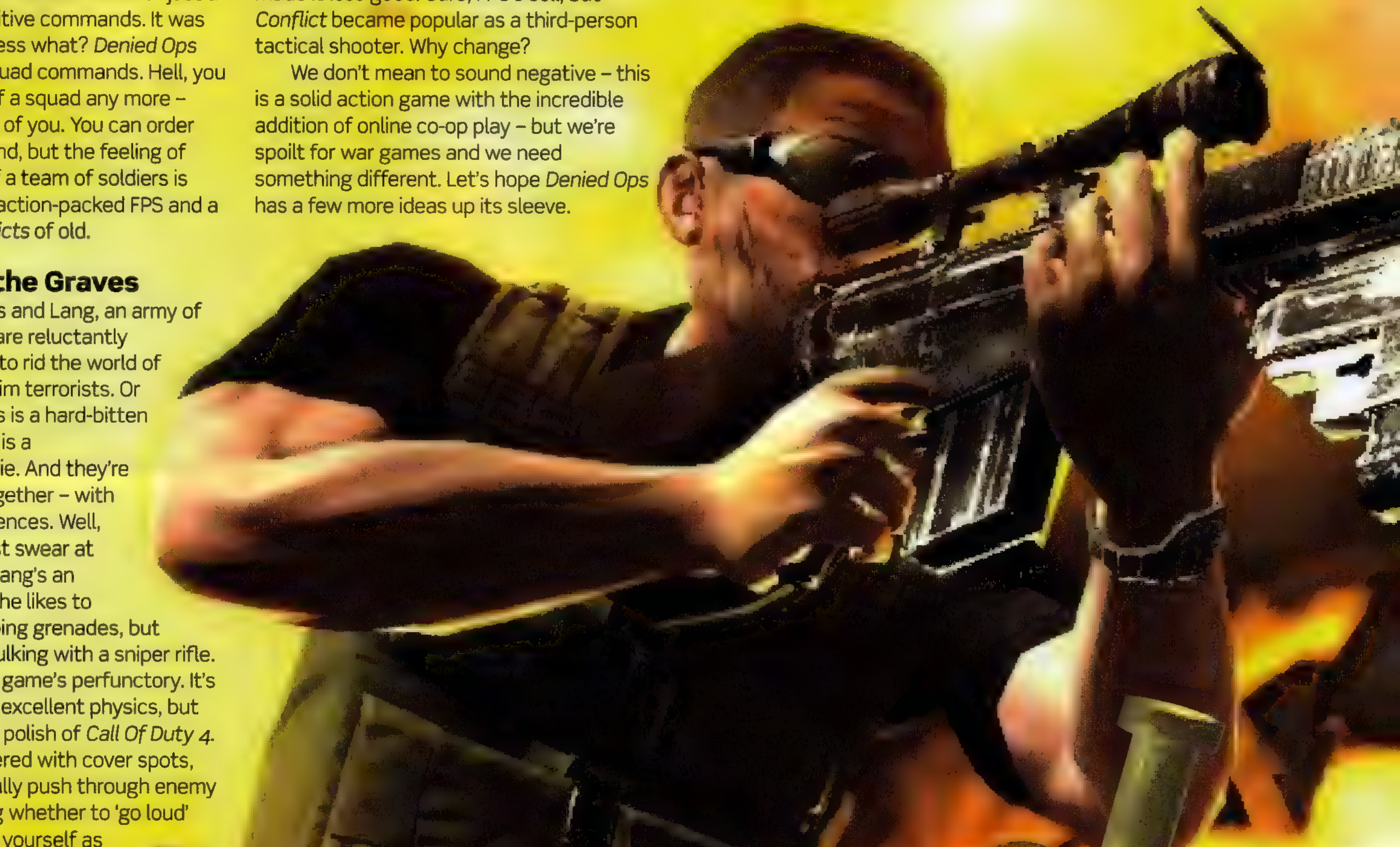
What made the *Conflict* series on PS2 so great was the squad controls. You could perform dozens of tactical manoeuvres with just a few context-sensitive commands. It was awesome. But guess what? *Denied Ops* has binned the squad commands. Hell, you aren't even part of a squad any more – there are just two of you. You can order your partner around, but the feeling of being in control of a team of soldiers is gone. Now it's an action-packed FPS and a far cry from *Conflicts* of old.

One foot in the Graves

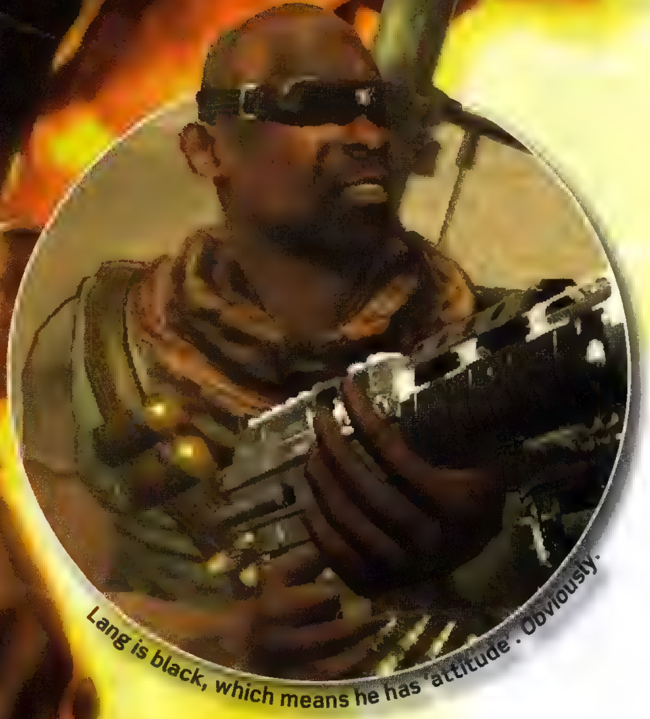
You control Graves and Lang, an army of two [cough] who are reluctantly working together to rid the world of commie nazi muslim terrorists. Or something. Graves is a hard-bitten veteran, but Lang is a wisecracking rookie. And they're forced to work together – with hilarious consequences. Well, not really, they just swear at each other a lot. Lang's an assault expert so he likes to barrel around lobbing grenades, but Graves prefers skulking with a sniper rifle.

Graphically, the game's perfunctory. It's nice enough, with excellent physics, but lacks the dazzling polish of *Call Of Duty 4*. The levels are littered with cover spots, letting you tactically push through enemy lines and choosing whether to 'go loud' with Lang or pace yourself as misery-guts Graves. It's these moments that remind us the most of the old games – but by making it an FPS they've instantly made it less good. Sure, FPS's sell, but *Conflict* became popular as a third-person tactical shooter. Why change?

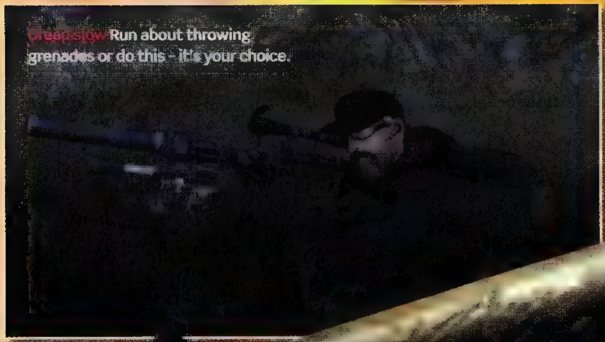
We don't mean to sound negative – this is a solid action game with the incredible addition of online co-op play – but we're spoilt for war games and we need something different. Let's hope *Denied Ops* has a few more ideas up its sleeve.



Too tough to die This is Graves, the sour-faced sniping expert. His chief export is *pain*.



Lang is black, which means he has 'attitude'. Obviously.

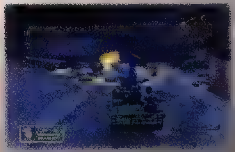


Creep slow Run about throwing grenades or do this – it's your choice.

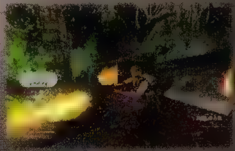
Shot to bits Graves slots a Communist as Lang covers his six. It's like something from an Andy McNab novel

EVOLUTION
Conflict series

Conflict: Desert Storm
PS2 2002
Intuitive squad controls, huge levels, memorable characters – ace all-round, basically.



Conflict: Desert Storm 2
PS2 2003
Smaller levels, but more set-pieces and ragdoll physics. Not as good as the first one.



Conflict: Vietnam
PS2 [illegible]
Platoon: The Video Game. Excellent licensed soundtrack, not-so-excellent gameplay.

Conflict: Global Storm
PS2 [illegible]
First female squad member added. The war went worldwide. Decent.

Blown away If this image were any manlier, the magazine would sprout hairs and wrestle you to the ground.

PSM3 Reckons

A departure from what made the series great, but a strong-looking action game in its own right. It *needs* more new ideas though.

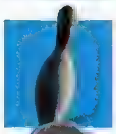
ETA
APRIL 2008

Your words, your pictures, your videos...

Your Space

Start

36 Letters
Choice cuts from the PSM3 mail sack.



37 PSN Mail
Send us a message over the PS3 Network.

38 Tech Ken
Ex-Sony guru answers your queries.

38 Poll Position
Vote – you'll see democracy in action.

39 MySpace
Our eight favourite readers this month.

40 Reader Reviews
Think we talk rubbish? You try it.

41 Right or Wrong?
Disagree with our scores? Say so.

41 YouTube
The best gamer videos out there.

PSM3 Wants You!

Post PSM3, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW. Star letter wins the writer a game

Email PSM3@futurenet.co.uk

PlayStation Network Send your messages to PSM

MySpace & the PSM3 blog Go to myspace.com/psm3 or check out psm3mag.com

Online Play the team at online games and win big

THE PLAYSTATION 3 MAGAZINE
PSM3

Letters To PSM3

Your letters and emails, sifted and printed

A man's fractured relationship with *PES*

LETTER

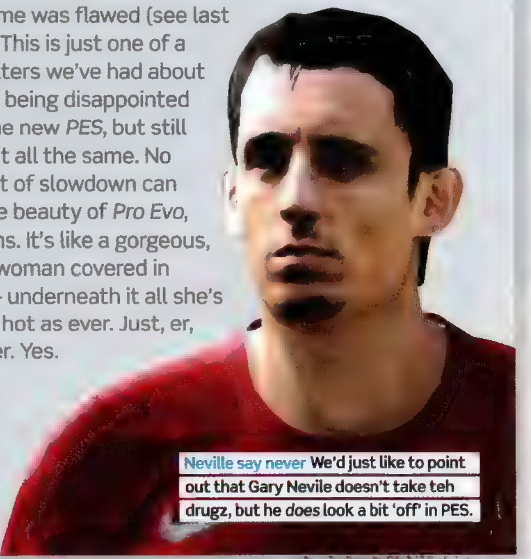
Seabass has never let me down before, so why now has he decided to rip off my head and lay a cable down my neck? I rush into town pick up a copy of the new *PES*, tell the missus to bugger off to her mum's for the day and slot it into my PS3, all the while dribbling with anticipation. Now, I had read the reviews and understood the same old licensing issues and that Master League was barely improved. Fine. I dive into a game – England vs Brazil – and the opening sequence starts up. Then I start to panic. Am I having an epileptic fit or is the frame rate really *that* bad? Then I realise it's not just me – Gary Neville really does look like he's been up all night smoking moon rock. Never mind, on with the game. I manage to score a goal and the replay fires up. Is the game engine taking the piss? It was a scrappy goal, but the whole squad are shuddering and juddering around my beautiful HD telly. Brazil manage to equalise and the game goes to penalties. I have to save first, then I think, "Christ this angle looks odd. Has Paul Robinson been on the Special Brew again?" But no, it's just a shockingly bad camera angle... and the penalties are taken at minus ten miles per hour. I go online, England vs France. Thierry Henry gets the ball near his own box and goes on a run, vanishes and then reappears 30 yards further down the pitch until the ball ends up in the back of my net.

Now I know he's a good player, but I didn't know his dad was Houdini. I get upset, switch off my PS3 and then realise the missus isn't even around to cook my dinner. I sit staring at the game box and begin to weep inside. Yet for all these faults, it's still the finest football game ever and I can't stop playing it. Damn you, Fishface.

Ryan Kemili, Redditch

> "Gary Neville looks like he's been up all night smoking moon rock"

Hey, at least Seabass admitted the game was flawed (see last issue). This is just one of a few letters we've had about people being disappointed with the new *PES*, but still loving it all the same. No amount of slowdown can ruin the beauty of *Pro Evo*, it seems. It's like a gorgeous, busty woman covered in Bovril – underneath it all she's still as hot as ever. Just, er, smellier. Yes.



Neville say never We'd just like to point out that Gary Nevile doesn't take teh drugz, but he *does* look a bit 'off' in PES.

Classy act

I finally bought a PlayStation 3, mainly because I have to play *Metal Gear Solid 4* when it comes out. First impressions? I didn't like it. The menu system was too complicated and, without rumble, games like *God Of War* felt like dry-humping. However PS3 has grown on me. The machine is truly a multimedia hub, and thanks to your advice to use the Movie Converter software, I've got all my favourite videos on it and my pictures and music. I like Blu-ray, love the built-in browser and built-in wireless. I love the fact I don't have to pay for online gaming. All in all the PS3 experience is classy and solid – not like my Xbox 360 which feels like it's going to do a Chernobyl on me at any minute. With rumble and a sensible price tag PS3 could have ruled from day one, but the past is the past. To all the doubters

Boom box You won't get problems like this with PS3.

"You What?"

Thanks for writing. No, Really

Bring back the Pro Dojo!
DJ Ducky Baz, MySpace
We've said it before and we'll say it again (and again and again until you all just shut up) – the Pro Dojo is dead. Finished. *Kaput*. Get over it and move on.

Why are there, like, four adverts for Xbox 360 in your PS3 magazine?
Tom, MySpace
Ask our advertising robots. Seriously. If we were in charge, we'd advertise spaceships.

In your *Bionic Commando* preview, his

PSNMail

Our PS3 username is PSM3uk. Send us a message. Please

Scared witless

Yo, homos! Why ain't you added me? You scared of losing? Haha! **Blu_D3vil**

You asked so nicely but.. no. Haha!

Care and share

God, you just don't care, do you? **Mysterioman**

We do, we just don't have time to respond the dozen messages we get a day.

Domestic dispute

My wife said she used to have a husband before the PS3 came into the house. The hours just fly by. **Olly1210**

Just like the removal van will fly by if you keep playing PlayStation in your pants. Leave Ratchet alone and cook your nice lady dinner.

Hit with the ladies

Will there be a new *Hitman* on PS3? **LMC01**

Yes – more news as we get it.

Old school

Will PS2 games ever be released on the PlayStation Network? **Sniperwolf_gy**

Maybe. We'll let you know.

Hit with the ladies

Do you like Skittles? **KillzoneQuinn07**

Yes – especially the ones you knock over with balls in old fashioned pubs. We can pass on the chewy sweets, though.

PlayStation Network send your messages to *PSM3uk*

out there – get yourselves a PS3, you won't be disappointed.
Michael Veal, Essex

Sony's new firmware updates are making the XMB less rubbish – the new custom themes are excellent. One of our office PS3s has a lovely *Final Fantasy VII* wallpaper and icon set. We'll be creating a PSM3 branded theme soon for the DVD, with our grinning faces replacing the icons. We aren't even joking about this. Well, maybe.

Hawk stock

A while back, My friend Daniel came over to see my shiny new 60gb monster. He looked impressed as we went on *Warhawk*, split-screen and caused mayhem. I was just catching a Eucadian sniper off-guard with the combat knife when my friend brought out his collection of PS2 games. I raised my eyebrows in suprise as he blew the dust off James Bond: Nightfire and stuck it in my PlayStation. I rolled my eyes to heaven as he requested a one-on-one Deathmatch – and *offline* too. I gritted my teeth but agreed. We went on the 'ravine' level, both as Odd Job. We stood at either end with a sniper rifle and hats. It was hysterically funny when we realised that Odd Job's cut-throat hat was a heat-seeking weapon. Trying to run from one building to the other when the other person was sniping was great. Amid all this cheer, it dawned on me with a mixture of horror and hilarity that this was more fun than Warhawk.

Hat's magic Sometimes we wish we had a heat-seeking razor blade hat. *Sigh...*

I realise now that the simpler things about gaming – having a laugh about the games rather than ooh-ing and ahh-ing at the mechanics and graphics --is much more important. In 50 years time am I going to remember flying around in a Warhawk? No. But I *will* remember throwing heat-seeking hats at Dan, and having great fun doing so.
Trahildar, email

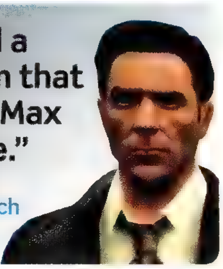
Yeah, sometimes a multi-player session is so memorable it sticks in your brain for years. One of ours is with, funnily enough, another Bond game – GoldenEye on N64. We invented a game called "Get Coltrane!" where one person went as the character played by Robbie Coltrane, and the other three would hunt him down yelling "Get Coltrane!" as loudly as possibe. Er, a bit mental in hindsight, but better – and loads more fun – than any of the official game modes the developers dreamed up.

Safari, so good

Lately I have found myself pondering the enigma that is *Afrika*, and I now reckon I have a working theory on what it actually is: a high end enhancement or add-on to *Home*, an open wilderness populated by wild animals which can

'Best' of the Blog

Visit PSM3MAG.COM and have your say



"I had a dream that I was Max Payne."
Posted by: Rorschach

"You see a woman. She strips off her clothes. Then POW! 'This Is Living' appears."
Posted by: NG_21

'Best' of the Rest

The conversation turns to guitars. Bobsickle says, "You have to treat your woman like a guitar. Fit her with a new graph-tech nut and bridge-saddles, pin some badges onto her strap and replace her broken scratch-plate." Right... "*Guitar Hero* does not interest me," says MGS2010. Tsk.

Blog We post every day. Mostly. Go to psm3mag.com for more.

Animal crackers We don't know if *Afrika* is an add-on for *Home*, but it's a great theory nonetheless.

So is *Afrika* a *Home* add-on? No i-deer. Ho ho ho.
We're gazelles, you twonk

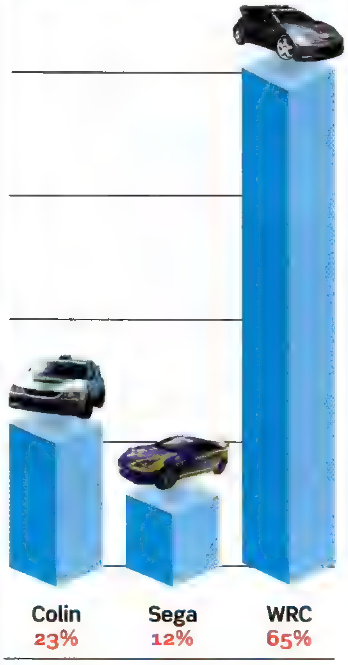
cyber-arm is on the left, but in one screenshot it's on his right! Does this mean you can switch arms?
Alyn Davies, Neath

Yes, that's exactly it. It's definitely *not* because we flipped the screenshot. No, sir.

Poll Position

We ask. You answer

This Month Best rally series:
Colin McRae, Sega Rally or *WRC*?



Next Month Best PSN game:
Warhawk, Blast Factor or *Flow*?

MySpace Cast your vote by emailing psm3@futurenet.co.uk

be explored, photographed and enjoyed. My reasoning? Firstly, the two main features to be showcased in the clips are the animals and the environment themselves. They are highlighted as the two main driving forces within the project. Secondly, there is the nondescript nature of the human subjects in the clips. By not building definition into these characters, the developers are showing significance through omission. Use of the *Home* avatars within the game would seem the logical conclusion.

Thirdly: *Aqua*, also currently a 'Working Title', may just be an underwater version, a sub-aquatic environment to explore – although there is currently a distinct lack of divers in the *Aqua* clips.

Lastly, there's the lack of info coming out about *Afrika*. If it is indeed an add-on for *Home*, then the postponement of *Home* would force *Afrika* onto the backburner, at least until the kinks got ironed out of its bigger brother. So what do you think – sound assumptions, or mad conjecture?

Brian Dunne, Mountmellick

Good theory, but there are some doubts. Looking at the screenshots and video footage, *Afrika*'s graphics engine looks completely different from *Home*'s. But we do expect *Afrika* to be compatible with *Home* somehow. Perhaps animal trophies in your avatar's house? As for *Aqua*, we doubt it'll ever actually come out. It's probably just a tech demo of some kind. More next month.

Remote chance

Here's an idea – allow PSP to play PS3 games, while the game being played is also displayed on the PS3 screen. Using the Internet people could move around and play games in other rooms. If this is not possible on the current PSP, then Sony should make a new one that enables this feature. I am aware of remote play but it doesnt interest me.

Calum, Accrington

Wireless is more It seems Sony's remote play tech isn't enough for some.

So, if you need to go to the toilet but you just can't bear to stop playing *Uncharted* for another second, you could continue leaping about the jungle from the comfort of your own porcelain throne? Hmm. Bit weird, really. Just pause it for a few minutes or something. Still, a good suggestion.

Smash and grab

I know you have probably seen 'Smash My PS3' and 'Smash My 360' on YouTube. When the guys smashed the 360 it broke into a million pieces, but when they did it to PS3 they only could chip the corner. This shows PS3's power and how crap the 360 is.

My friend has a 360 and he has gone through three wired mics, which you get free when you buy it. They only last two months, which shows how crap they are. He then bought a wireless mic, which again only lasted two months, and has bought a second one. Microsoft don't care about their 360 or anything they make. I keep hearing about 360s breaking – this shows how rubbish the system is.

John Sullivan, email

Well, Xbox 360 isn't rubbish, but we still prefer PS3. But it is good to know that, were we to smash our PS3 with a hammer, our console would still stay in one piece. In fact, we're going to go drop ours down some stairs right now. Sony may get a lot of things wrong, but they sure can make a durable machine.

The nurse is stealing from me!

Tech Ken

Live from his retirement home, ex-Sony guru Ken Kutaragi answers your tech questions

Dear Ken

Would it be possible to download mods for *Oblivion* onto my PS3? I know you probably can't, but I must not give up without a fight. Tell it to me straight, Ken. I will grieve for a while but will move on. Eventually.

BenchMark, email

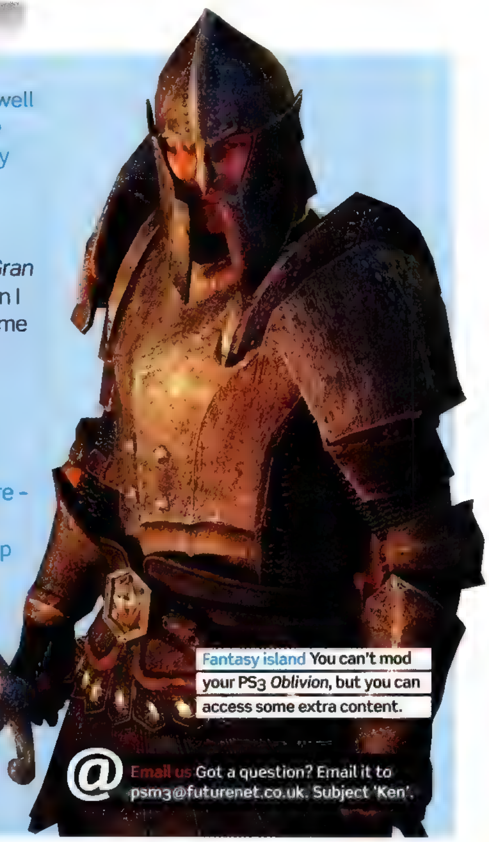
"Short answer – nope, yer bloody well can't, which is reet annoying 'cause there are loads of mods for *Oblivion* on PC that fix the game's hundred or so game-breaking glitches, as well as making the characters look less hideously ugly. Annoying, eh? The good news, though, is that the Game Of The Year Edition comes pre-installed with the excellent *Shivering Isles* expansion pack, as well as the lengthy *Knights Of The Nine* bonus quest. Will that do? It'll ruddy well have to, son."

Dear Ken

I want to download the Japanese *Gran Turismo 5 Prologue* demo, but when I try and get an account it won't let me because I don't understand all the Japanese writing. Please help!

Tattoo, email

"Well, lad, yer actually *can* get a Japanese PSN account. But I don't 'ave time to tell ye exactly how here – you obviously have the Internet. There are lots of great step-by-step illustrated guides to beating the system and accessing the Japanese PS Store on there – try tinyurl.com/2cwv5n for one, but a quick Google search will show yer loads more. It's reet easy to do. Get crackin'."



Fantasy island You can't mod your PS3 *Oblivion*, but you can access some extra content.

@ Email us Got a question? Email it to psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject 'Ken'.

"We realised Odd Job's hat was a heat-seeking weapon"
Trahildar email

Bargain bin

I won't lie, I'd love a PS3. I'd quite happily sell my Nan for one. However, due to a lack of money, and no interest in my Nan from the public, it seems like I'm stuck with my ageing, and for some strange reason wheezing, PS2.

But since the release of PS3, my PS2 has found its second wind Last month I picked up *God of War 2*, *TimeSplitters 2* and *Resident Evil 4*, all for £30. I was jumping for joy. The pre-owned market has boomed, with nearly every single PS2 title finding its way to some bargain shelf. I spent nearly 12 months looking for *007: Everything Or Nothing*, but couldn't find it in my local game stores or on the internet. But not long after the release of PS3, I found five in a space of a week.

I still would love rip some mud up in *MotorStorm*, soar through the skies in *Warhawk* and blast my way through the galaxy in *Rachet & Clank*; but I think for now I'm quite happy playing these PS2 titles. And it keeps my Nan happy.

James Prideaux, email

You didn't really buy five copies of *Everything Or Nothing*, did you? Anyway, James, you're one of a very small group of people who appreciate getting classic games like that for cheap; most will be yearning for the next in the series on PS3. But it's good to see there's some life left in PS2, even if it is based almost entirely on (great) bargain bin games.

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£5
PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4
3+

Cheap as chips Play classics like this for pennies, providing you missed them the first time.

UK myspace a place for friends
Go to www.myspace.com/psm3 and join us

PSM3's Top Eight

MySpace readers who rock our world

Melbox

ABOUT HER

"I love abstract art and poetry."

INTERESTS

"I am a huge fan of the *Dragon Warrior* and *Dragon Quest* games, and also anything Dragon Ball related. I absolutely love anything created by Akira Toriyama."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Dragon Quest (obviously)

WHY WE MADE HER TOP 8

We love Akira Toriyama too. He designed the characters in our favourite SNES game, *Chrono Trigger*. Remember that? Oh.

K-Ci

ABOUT HIM

"I want to live forever. So far, so good. I can be pretty needy, so any stalkers are welcome."

INTERESTS

"Rustlers, murderers, bounty hunters, desperadoes, mugs, pugs, thugs, nitwits, half-wits, dimwits, vipers, snipers, con men, Mexican bandits and methodists."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Guitar Hero 2

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

We've always wanted to meet a Mexican bandit. We met a Mexican once. He was pretty offended when we asked if he was a bandit.

Shannon

ABOUT HIM

"I'm a pretty relaxed sorta guy who likes to hang out with my mates. You know who you are!"

HOBBIES

"I've taken an interest in acting, although I haven't had a chance to practice yet."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Grand Theft Auto: Vice City

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

We often take an interest in things and then just don't practice them. Tobogganing, sniping, quantum physics, archery... you name it.

Melissa

ABOUT HER

"I love TV, movies, videogames, the internet – BRING ON JANUARY!"

INTERESTS

Music: "Britney Spears, Avril Lavigne, Linkin Park, Lifehouse, Evanescence." Films: "Anything staring Kiefer Sutherland, Star Wars saga, Indiana Jones trilogy, Lord Of The Rings trilogy."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

MGS3: Subsistence, *24: The Game*

WHY WE MADE HER TOP 8

She's obsessed with Kiefer Sutherland. Have you seen that video of him on YouTube jumping into a Christmas tree? *Brilliant*.

Ravenheart

ABOUT HIM

"I want to get my life on track and learn how to drive."

RANDOM WIBBLE

"Rock clubs, playing on my computer, watching football. Would like a good job with a good wage. Trying to learn guitar. Harder than it looks. I love going out drinking and subculture."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Kingdom Hearts 2, *Dark Chronicle*

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

We love sub culture. We attend regular submarine meetings, and have memberships to the UK Sub Society. Oh, *subculture*...

Tom

ABOUT HIM

"I have no life. Can't sing, can't dance, can't act."

INTERESTS

"Playing my PS2, PS3, Xbox, Xbox 360, reading, Lego, watching a good film, listening to my iPod, reading a good book, imagining, cards, watching TV, surfing."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Oblivion, *MotorStorm*

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

Yeah, imagining is awesome. Right now we're imagining a penguin wearing a snorkel falling backwards into a bowl of soup. Ho.

Nick

ABOUT HIM

"This year I conquered my fear and went on a rollercoaster. I like going on them now."

MUSIC

"I like all kinds of music. At the moment I'm listening to Band Of Horses, who I discovered through EA's game *Skate*. I like old music from last century, mostly."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Assassin's Creed, *Call of Duty 4*

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

Band Of Horses are great, and the song in *Skate* is one of our favourites. And we agree – last century's music was way better.

Jimmy-saki

ABOUT HIM

"I've fooked off to Facebook. I'm sports mad – if it's a sport, you can bet your ass I'm watching it."

SPORTS

"Ten-pin bowling, rugby league, footy, US football, darts, kerbie, hedge-jumping and knock-a-door-run. Pub olympics, The 100 yard stagger."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Madden 08

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

We're impressed by how he's watching every sports event in the world at once. He really does love sport. Sport!

MySpace Want to make our Top Eight? Go to www.myspace.com/psm3 and send us a friend request. We'll welcome you onboard sharpish.

You What?

My mate bought *Assassin's Creed*, but he doesn't have a PS3 so he's coming round my house to play it.
Delicious Rowntree Flash, MySpace
Who in their right mind buys a PS3 game if they don't have a PS3? Refuse him access to your house.

My favourite bread-based desert is banoffee pie. My favourite ice-cream based desert is lemon sorbet.
Chizaranasaurus, MySpace
Vital information. Thanks ever so much.

Argh! My mum has wrapped up my PS3. No more sneaky plays.
Glowstick Waving Nutter, MySpace
Buy identical wrapping paper and just wrap and unwrap it whenever you fancy a play. Simple.

For breakfast I have bacon and tea, and wash it down with a glass of vodka.
Nezumiiro Kitsune, MySpace
Instead of vodka, try absinthe. Refreshing.

Reader Critic

Disagree with our reviews? Then show us how it's done

Rave on Should 'Taker be burying the *Smackdown* games?

Smackdown Vs Raw 2008

Chris ain't happy with *Smackdown*'s new direction...

Reader Profile

Name **Chris McStea**
Location **Cheriton, Kent**
Fave games ***Call Of Duty 4, Oblivion, GTA: San Andreas***
About me **I don't buy that many games as I'm very fussy, but when I do take to one I play it obsessively. When I grow up I would like to work on cartoons.**

Last year's *Smackdown* was great, particularly the Season and Create A Character modes. Looking forward to this edition, I popped the disc in – and it's no exaggeration to say that I was gutted when I realised what absolute bilge it is.

Within seconds of the first match starting I was taken aback by how slow everything is. I know that wrestlers aren't exactly light on their feet, but in this game they move like they're wading through treacle.

But my main gripe is 24/7 mode. They have completely ruined the entertaining Season option of last year by making the whole thing overly complicated and tedious. The training sections are instantly repetitive. Yes, you can simulate those, but if you choose to do that you are treated to a lengthy loading process just to get a random result.

The new control set up is laughable. Accessing the Ultimate Control moves by pushing ← or → on the stick instead of the old way effectively halves the amount of strong grapple attacks on offer. And the new fighting styles are, for my money, nothing more than a hastily tacked-on addition, a desperate attempt to justify the release of the game by showing they have done something new. Storing these abilities seems to have replaced the option to store your finisher, meaning that anyone you play against knows exactly when you will be trying to hit them with your finishing manoeuvre. This removes any element of surprise from the way the match plays out and makes every turn feel scripted and boring. Redeeming features? I honestly can't think of any. Don't even bother with it. **Chris McStea**

Reader Verdict

Ridiculous omissions and a lack of new ideas mean this sucks.

59

@ Email us Subject 'Critic' to psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Or post a review to the usual address.

Assassin's Creed

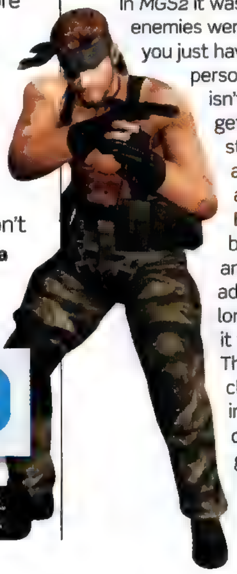
Not all that, according to Arnold...

I was really looking forward to this adventure game, but now that I have played it I discover that actually it is quite dull. OK, so the environments and levels are incredible to look at and the world is incredibly realistic and atmospheric, but there's just nothing to do. You wander around, eavesdrop on people to find assassination targets and that's it. You can't really explore, and there are no distractions like in *GTA*. Once you've climbed every tall building there's really not much else to do. Also, the soldiers are psychic. You can do something as simple as bump into someone and they will yell "Stop! Assassin!" even though you'd been undetected up until this point. This game is just good and no more. It's fun for a few hours but it gets old quick. And the tutorial is far too long. **Arnold Miller**

77

MGS3: Snake Eater

Not quite as good as *MGS2*

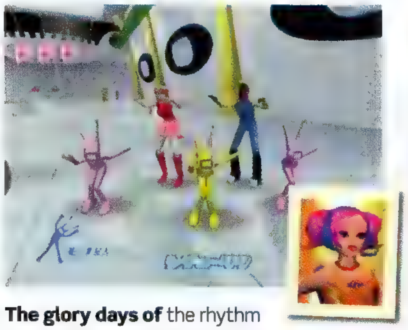


This is the game that most people think is the best in the series, but I think that it's the second best – for these reasons. First, the radar is missing. In *MGS2* it was easy to see where enemies were looking, but in *MGS3* you just have to look at them in first-person. Secondly, the setting isn't at good. The jungle can get quite repetitive. But it is still an amazing game with a story that will grip you and terrific characters. Big Boss is a legend and the boss characters – The Fear and so on – are very unique adversaries. This is a very long game too, which makes it feel like value for money. The camouflage system is clever and you can blend into your surroundings to catch enemy soldiers off-guard. Awesome game, but not as good as *MGS2*. **Rory McMahon**

89

"Despite its faults, *PES* is still the best footie game."
Ryan Kemill Redditch

Space Channel 5
Rhythm action classic gets reappraised



The glory days of the rhythm action game are long gone. There are no modern-day equivalents of *Parappa The Rapper* or *Gitaroo Man*. Or, the best one ever, *Space Channel 5*. In this game you play as Ulala, a dancing TV reporter in a weird space-world. Aliens attack and Ulala has to battle them by dancing. It's a weird idea, but the game is really stunning to look at and the music is incredible. The funky '60s tunes play and you have to tap the buttons in time to defeat the Morolian aliens. The gameplay is quite limited and it can get very difficult sometimes, but it's just so much fun that you'll keep coming back to it – sometimes just to hear the music and see the visuals. I wish they'd do a PSP remake of this, like they did with *Gitaroo Man*. It's ace. **Marie Jameson**

91

PSM3
You were so right!
Reader love

"The best skate simulation ever made. Way better than *Tony Hawk's*"
PepsyMax, email

Skate
We said "A skater's skate game *anyone* can enjoy, with a near-perfect control system."
PSM93 | Dan Dawkins | 91%

"All the challenges are the same and there are no lip tricks to perform"
CellarDoor, email

PSM3
You were so wrong!

YouTube The Video Zone
Out there gamer vids from the cyberdepths

11-year-old does Dragonforce on *Guitar Hero III* by vakshen

ACE Arguably the hardest *Guitar Hero* track ever, Through The Fire And Flames by Dragonforce, beaten by an 11-year-old. Last months *Guitar Hero* kid has got nothing on this. http://tinyurl.com/yse7kv

PES 2008 Crossbar bug by SoulPunish3r

LOL There are a lot of videos on YouTube showing off bugs in the latest *PES*, but this one was definitely the funniest (from Xbox code). The PS3 version would never do this. <cough> http://tinyurl.com/2zj7ge

Assassin's Creed's excitable guard by kitsunegaijin

YAY Some people found *Assassin's Creed* to be a tad overhyped, but this guard seems to be enjoying the game just a bit too much. At least he died on a high... http://tinyurl.com/294rz9

Call Of Duty 'parody' by kingi707

ODD Here we have a bunch of kids playing *Call Of Duty 4* in real life. And by "real life" we mean "running around senseless shooting toy guns." Who said games are a bad influence, eh? Oh. http://tinyurl.com/ypgrq6

@ Email us Created your own brilliant fan vid? Or just found a gem you want to share? Email psm3@futurenet.co.uk and tell us all about it.

PSM3
CALL OF DUTY

PSM3
DARKNESS

PSM3
GOD OF WAR 2

PSM3
JOHN WOO PRESENTS
STRANGLEHOLD

Issue 85

Issue 86

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THE PLAYSTATION®3 MAGAZINE
PSM3
3 | PlayStation 2 | PSP
"The ending will be epic. People will talk about MGS4 for years to come" Kojima Productions
S4
proudest,
on pg22...
15
JANUARY 2008
£3.99
THE PLAYSTATION®3 MAGAZINE
PSM3 DVD
Over two hours of PlayStation ... & PSP video
15
STREET FIGHTER IV
Hadouken! Must-see rebirth of 2D legend
DEVIL MAY CRY 4
All-new hi-def footage of DMC's wildest set pieces
ALL-NEW
future

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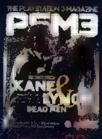
Issue 88

Issue 89

Issue 90

Issue 91

Issue 92

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Issue 95

Back Issues

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Surf's Up

Catch the wave and hang ten, or rather six, in the crazy, animated world of the Penguin World Surfing Championships. Featuring a star-studded cast, Surf's Up follows penguin surf star Cody Maverick as his documentary team cover his first ever professional championship.

Ghost Rider

Johnny Blaze was only a teenage stunt biker when he sold his soul to the devil to save his dying father. Years later, Mephistopheles is back to claim his part of the bargain. This is the Extended Cut of Ghost Rider featuring 13 minutes of footage not seen at the cinema.

Blu-ray Disc
SURF'S UP
THE OCEAN JUST GOT COOLER
PG
RIENCE HIGH DEF N
Blu-ray Disc
EXTENDED CUT
NICOLAS CAGE
EVA MENDES
GHOST RIDER
HIS CURSE WILL BECOME HIS POWER
...astonishing special effects...
The Observer
★★★★
★★★★
15
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Blu-ray Disc

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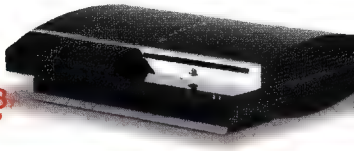
ON THE DISC

See lots of this year's (and some of next year's) best games

20 review of



07 the year

It was PS3's first year – what a 12 months it's been...

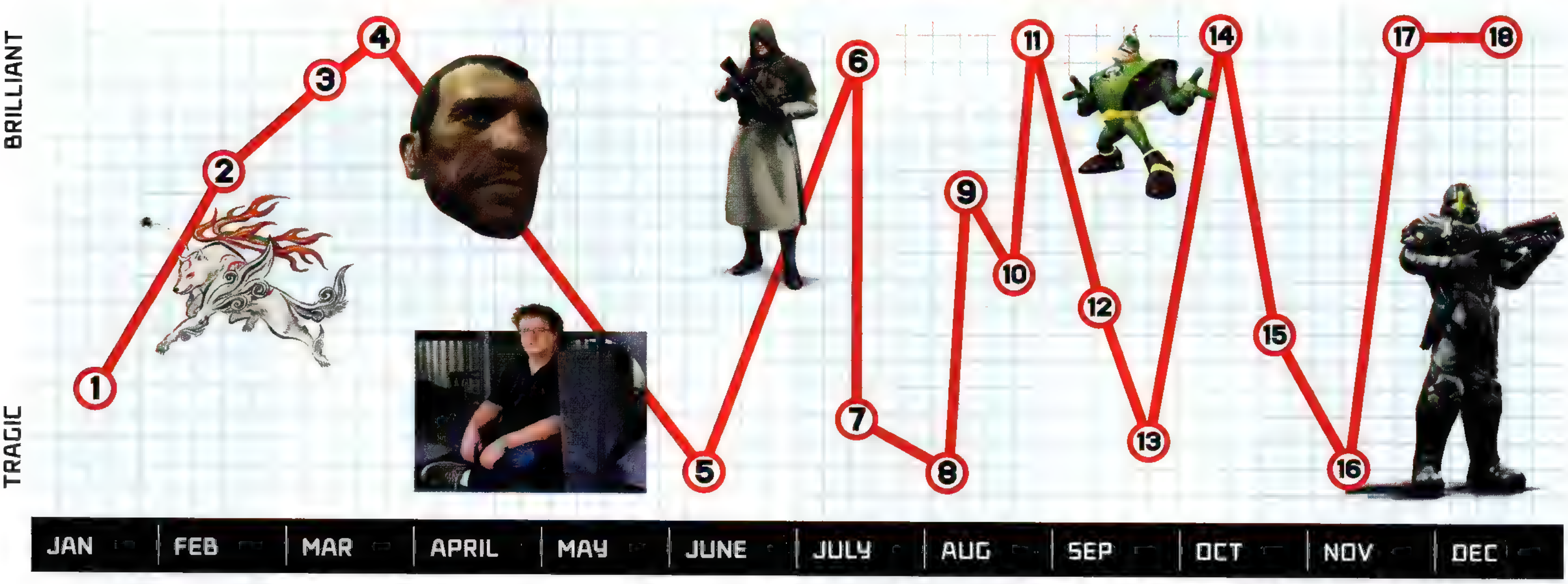
Delays. That's what everyone will remember most about PS3's first full year on sale – it began with us waiting impatiently for PS3's delayed launch date, and ends with us waiting impatiently for *MGS4*/*Killzone 2*/*GTAIV*'s delayed launch dates.

But after a shaky first few months, typified by lethargic sales and bodge jobs like *Pirates Of The Caribbean*, PS3's been gathering momentum, assisted partly by a wave of great games (including exclusives like *Ratchet*, *Uncharted* and *Warhawk*), but also due to a whacking great price cut.

It's been a decent year for PS3, despite the teething troubles. Hopefully, the delays and programming difficulties have laid the foundations for a momentous 2008. For now, though, enjoy our look back at a rollercoaster 365 days: from the lows of *Genji*, to naked RPG dinner parties, to the imperious *COD4*. Now, without further delay...

The 2007 thrill-o-graph

The highs and lows of the last 12 months



① Still sulking after Xmas-less PS3, but we know it'll be here in March.

② *Okami* out, just in time to fill the gap until PS3. A PS2 classic.

③ PS3 out. Sony claim record sales. *LBP* and *Home* unveiled at GDC.

④ *GTAIV* trailer hits web. Net almost crippled under excess traffic.

⑤ Gabe Newell, *Half-Life 2* developer, calls PS3 "a disaster".

⑥ E3. Amazing new *Killzone*, *Resi 5*, *GTAIV*, *MGS4* trailers unleashed.

⑦ Activision's E3 press conference host Jamie Kennedy bombs, calling gamers geeks and virgins. Activision CEO weeps.

⑧ *GTAIV* delayed until April. Whaaaa? World sobs as one.

⑨ *Warhawk* released – the greatest online game ever? Possibly so – for now, at least...

⑩ Sony announce Play TV, which lets your PS3 receive digital-TV and record shows to the hard drive.

⑪ PSM3 scoop the world-exclusive *Ratchet* PS3 review. Best PS3 game yet – hurrah. *Skate* also thrills.

⑫ DualShock 3 announced – but it's not out in the UK until March.

⑬ *Army Of Two* delayed – nanoseconds after we go to press with the exclusive review. Gnngh.

⑭ £300 40gb PS3 and £350 60gb PS3 go on sale. PS3 sales rocket.

⑮ *PES 2008* is ridden with slowdown. PSM3 feel *real* sad.

⑯ *Blacksite*, *Orange Box*, *Haze*, *Unreal 3* and *MGS4* delayed.

⑰ ... but no matter – *Call Of Duty 4* is released, and it's amazing.

⑱ *Drake's*, *Ratchet*, *Assassin's* and *SingStar* all out. Happy Christmas.

The PSM3 Wrong-Righter Special

Our most successful predictions... and some total duffers

UK PS3 LAUNCH DATE ☑ RIGHT

March 23, we said on our year planner. And lo and behold – we were right. Still, that four month delay flew by. Kind of.

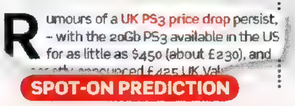
FRIDAY
PS3 out today! (date approximately correct at time of going to press)

ON THE MONEY

PSM 82 wallchart

UK PS3 PRICE-CUT IMMINENT ☑ RIGHT

"A slash to £350, and a new 'streamlined' PS3 with reduced connections and media capabilities for £300," we said. We were exactly right.

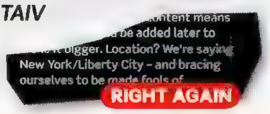

Rumours of a UK PS3 price drop persist, – with the 20Gb PS3 available in the US for as little as $450 (about £230), and

SPOT-ON PREDICTION

PSM 92 page 16

GTAIV BACK TO LIBERTY CITY ☑ RIGHT

"Location? We're saying New York/Liberty City," we claimed in our Games Of 2007 feature – when we thought *GTAIV* would *actually* be out in 2007. D'oh.


...ontent means ...be added later to ...bigger. Location? We're saying New York/Liberty City – and bracing ourselves to be made fools of.

RIGHT AGAIN

PSM 87 Supplement

PES 2008: THE BEST YET ☒ WRONG

We said "PES and PS3 might be a match made in heaven". Then we played the final code, saw the slowdown. We still play every lunchtime, but through a mask of tears.

Master League tweak, ... online news – *Pro Evo 2008* and PS3 might be a match made in heaven.

WHOOPS

PSM 92 page 26

KANE & LYNCH TO BE GREAT ☒ WRONG

We were quite excited by our original hands-on, and said "we *have* to know how this turns out". And how it turned out was... broken and disappointing. Pah.

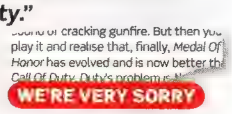
Army ... with a plot that intrigu... the evil minds behind *Hitman* at work and some beautiful set-pieces, we h... to know how this one turns out.

OH DEAR, OH DEAR

PSM 88 page 26

MOH: AIRBORNE TO BE BETTER THAN *COD4* ☒ WRONG

Oh, dear. "*Medal Of Honor* has evolved, and is now better than *Call Of Duty*." In fairness, *MoH did* look good, on that, er, 78" TV...


... cracking gunfire. But then you play it and realise that, finally, *Medal Of Honor* has evolved and is now better th... *Call Of Duty*...

WE'RE VERY SORRY

PSM 88 page 32

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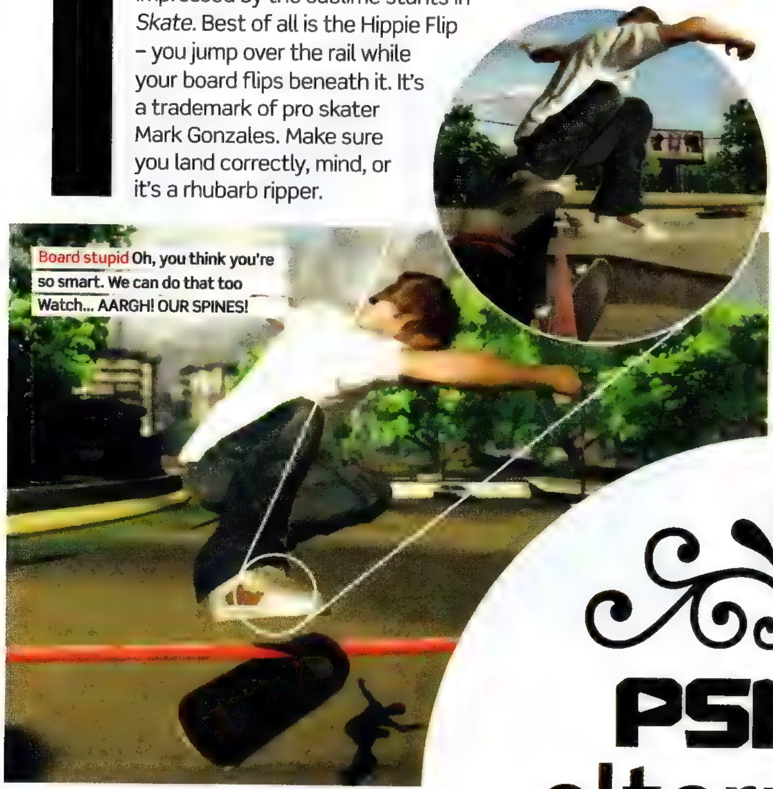
PSM3's alternative awards 2007

1 TOP SHOWOFF STUNT

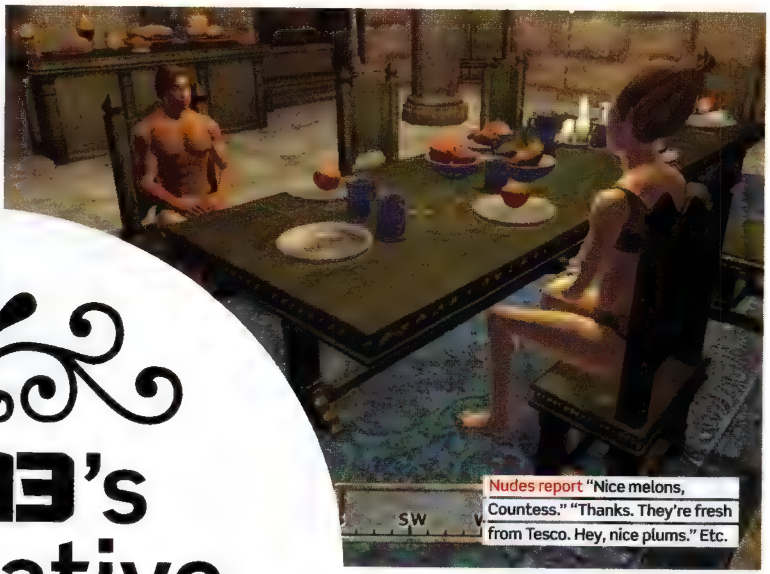
Given that a 'mystery' team member (Andy) broke his foot the *very first time* he ever stepped on a skateboard, it's hard not to be impressed by the sublime stunts in *Skate*. Best of all is the Hippie Flip – you jump over the rail while your board flips beneath it. It's a trademark of pro skater Mark Gonzales. Make sure you land correctly, mind, or it's a rhubarb ripper.



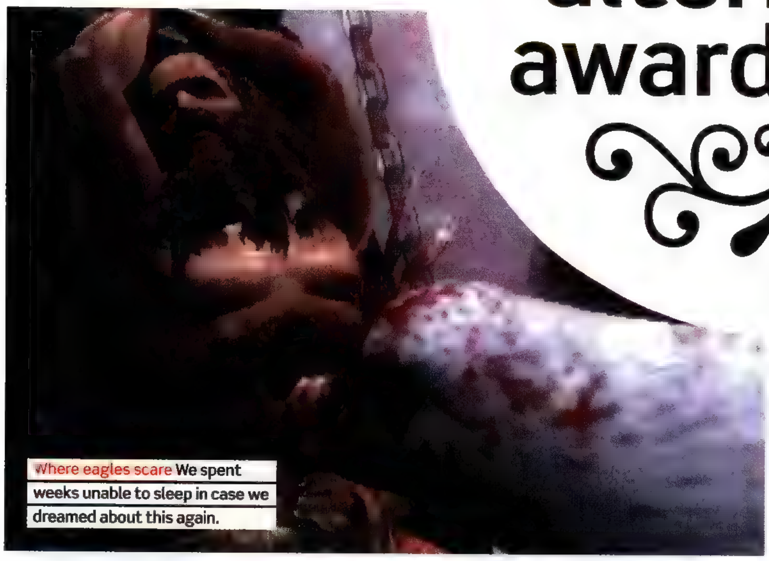
Board stupid Oh, you think you're so smart. We can do that too Watch... AARGH! OUR SPINES!

2 MOST AWKWARD DINNER PARTY

Oblivion's Stark Reality spell – given to you by the mischievous Sanguine, god of hedonism – is a hoot, allowing you to strip everyone down to their tighty-whities at the press of a button. Sanguine wants to embarrass the Countess Of Leyawiin at a hugely important dinner party, so off you go. Unfortunately, the spell works on you as well, leaving you trekking back home in your Primark boxers. Worth it, though.



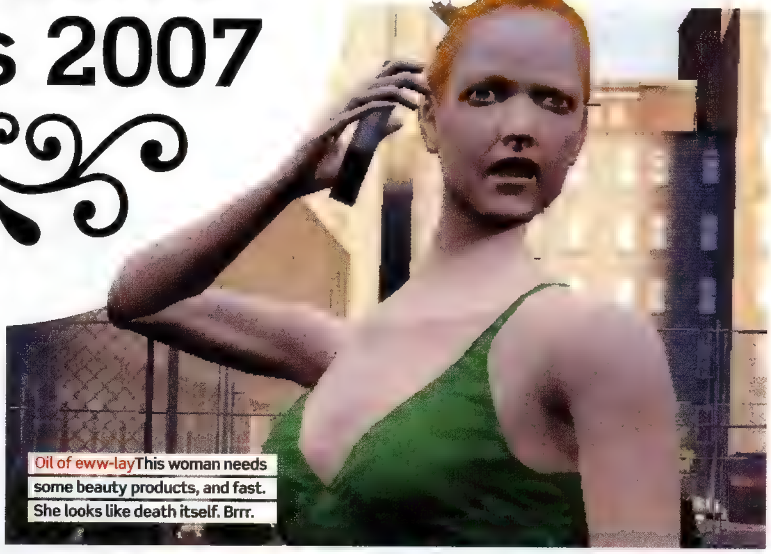
Nudes report "Nice melons, Countess." "Thanks. They're fresh from Tesco. Hey, nice plums." Etc.



Where eagles scare We spent weeks unable to sleep in case we dreamed about this again.

3 MOST GRUESOME DEJA-VU EVER

To be fair, stealing fire – even from the gods – doesn't sound like that much of a crime. Pity poor Prometheus in *God Of War 2*, then, who did just that – and was harshly sentenced to have his liver torn out each and every day by an eagle the size of Cuba. It's one of the most messy, stomach-churning scenes in games and, if we ever have to suffer our own Groundhog Day-style experience, we sincerely hope it isn't one like this.



Oil of eww-lay This woman needs some beauty products, and fast. She looks like death itself. Brrr.

4 LEAST LIKELY TO WIN AMERICA'S NEXT TOP MODEL

Oh dear God... what was *wrong* with the people in *Spider-Man 3*? Massive bulbous eyes, deathly white skin, brittle-looking limbs... are this lot the result of some catastrophic nuclear explosion that went unreported? If so, why didn't Spidey save everyone? Beauty is only skin deep, but there are limits.

11 things we learned in 2007

01 Good things come to those who wait... The launch line-up was decent, but it took an age before the real AAA quality games. Now we have *Ratchet & Clank, Uncharted, Warhawk, Rock Band*... we're happy.

02 Seabass isn't infallible "We didn't want to release it in this state," he said of *PES 2008* in PSM95. Next year's will be better, though... *right*?

03 Last-gen features are next-gen features "Rumble is a last-gen feature," said Sony's Phil Harrison back in Spring. Sony announced the rumble-enabled DualShock 3 a few months later. Ouch.

04 Selling consoles isn't rocket science £425 for a console with no AAA games? Barely any sales. £300 or £350? Lots of sales. Simple.

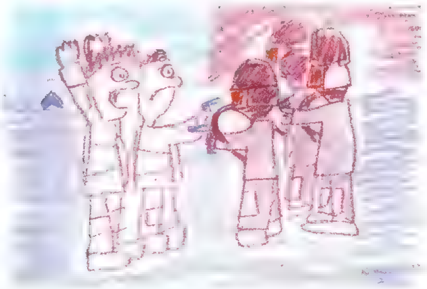
05 PS3's not easy to program for... Valve's Gabe Newell (PSM90) has been most vocal on this, but *Ratchet* and *CoD4* (better on PS3 than Xbox – if only by fractions) show what PS3 can do.

06 Sixaxis motion-control is balls As *Lair* (PSM93, 54%) and Sega's Guy Wilday attest. As he said in PSM85, "The whole tilt control thing is rubbish – it's no compensation for rumble."

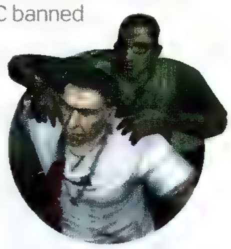
07 We don't need *Tony Hawk* any more, because of *Skate*. Rumour: next *Hawk* game will start from scratch.

08 Next-gen tech can't change everything *POTC, Spider-Man, Transformers*... film licenses are still mince.

09 A picture paints a thousand words Sony showed us a special *Killzone 2* trailer in March that we weren't allowed to record. So we did some crayon sketches instead, *thoroughly* conveying the game's bombastic majesty. Yes.



10 We can't be trusted not to turn into killers The BBFC banned *Manhunt 2*. Good for them, or we'd definitely have been inflluenced to stab everyone in Sainsbury's in the throat with a biro. *Definitely*..

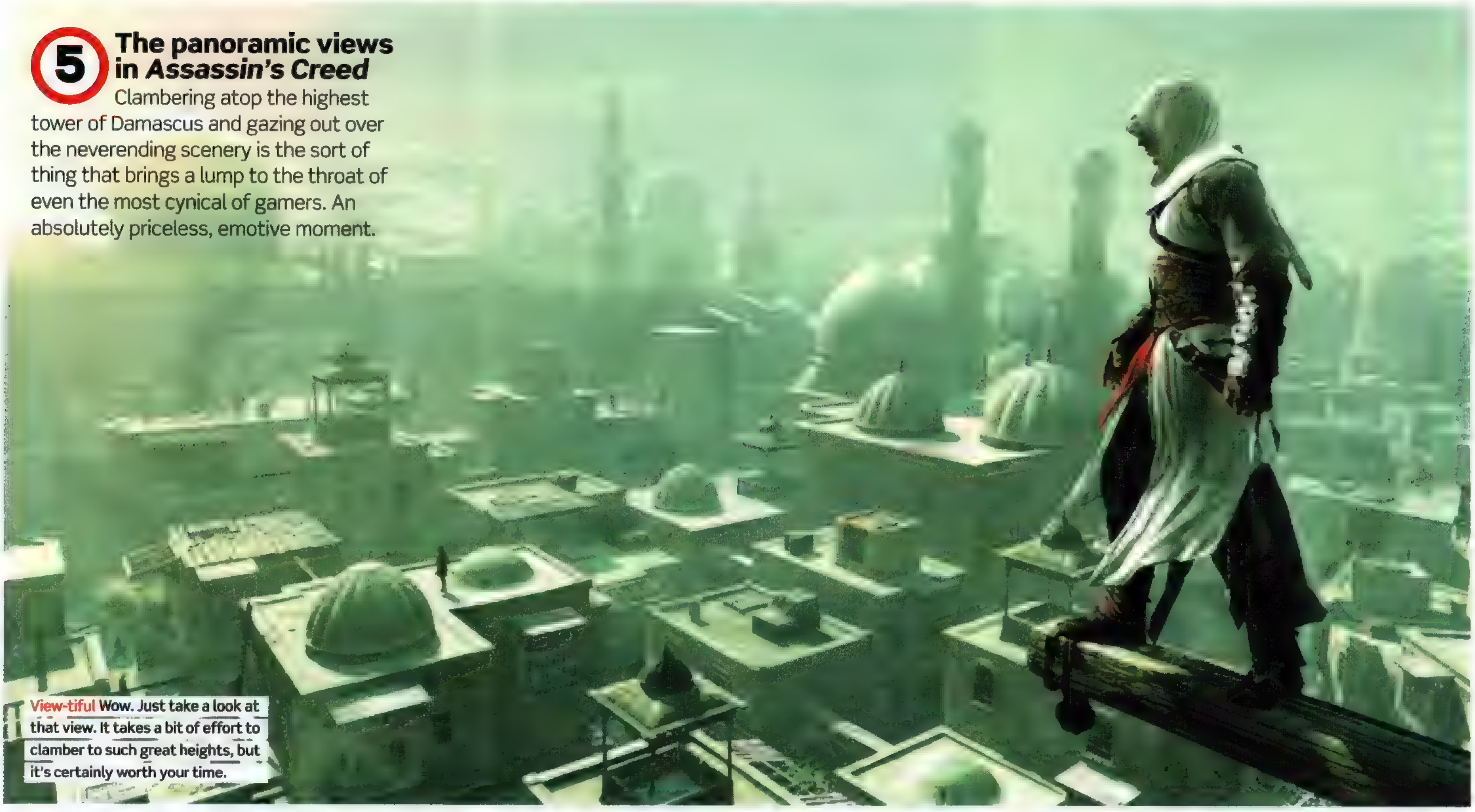


11 EA will license *anything*... See the Godfather jeans in PSM83. If there was ever an offer we *can* refuse...

PSM3's defining moments of 2007

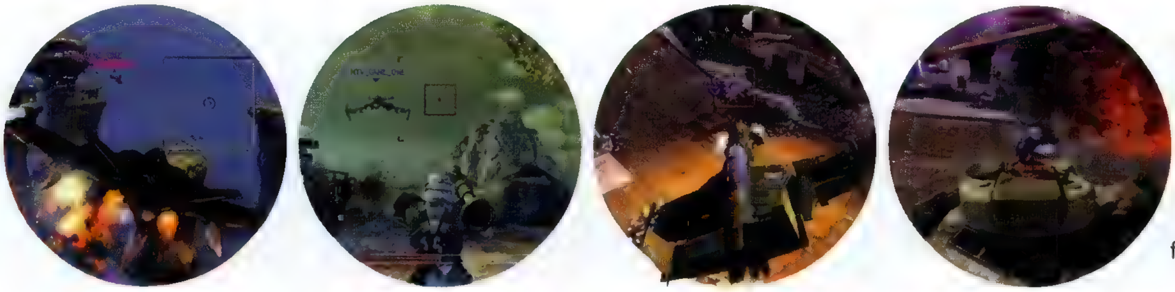
5 The panoramic views in *Assassin's Creed*

Clambering atop the highest tower of Damascus and gazing out over the neverending scenery is the sort of thing that brings a lump to the throat of even the most cynical of gamers. An absolutely priceless, emotive moment.



View-tiful Wow. Just take a look at that view. It takes a bit of effort to clamber to such great heights, but it's certainly worth your time.

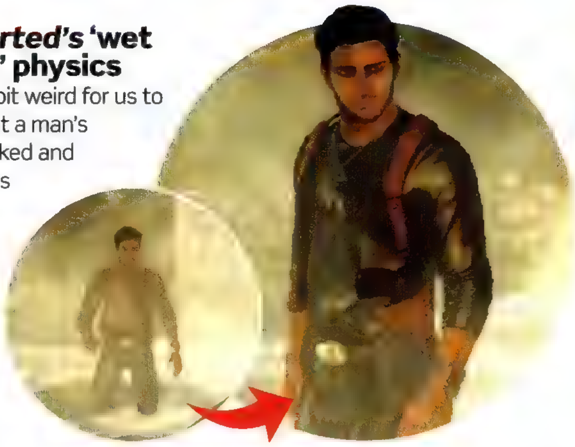
4 *Warhawk*'s dynamic online battling



CoD4 is arguably better (see pg96), but being able to play against 31 *actual people* in a smooth, dynamic game world has an impact you'll never forget. And it's only £19.99.

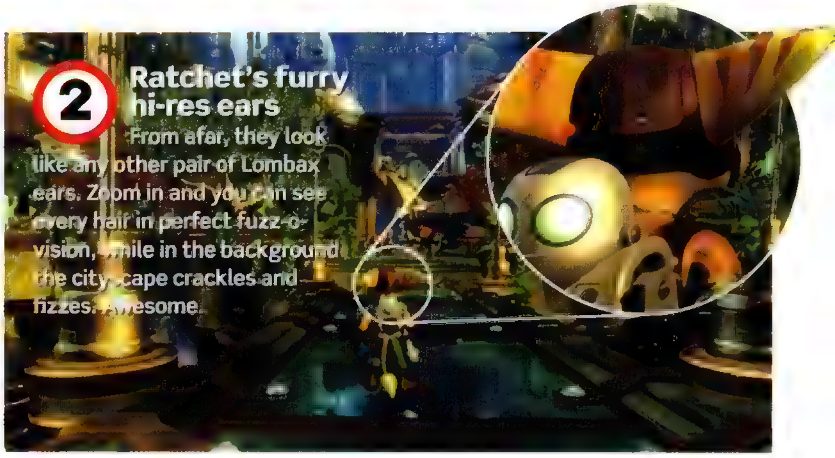
3 *Uncharted*'s 'wet t-shirt' physics

OK, it's a bit weird for us to get so excited about a man's clothes getting soaked and clinging tightly to his skin, but we are. Look how his outfits gets wet and dry in real-time. Ooh, lovely. Let's get him wet through again. Mmm... lovel..., er, *realistic*. That's it.



2 Ratchet's furry hi-res ears

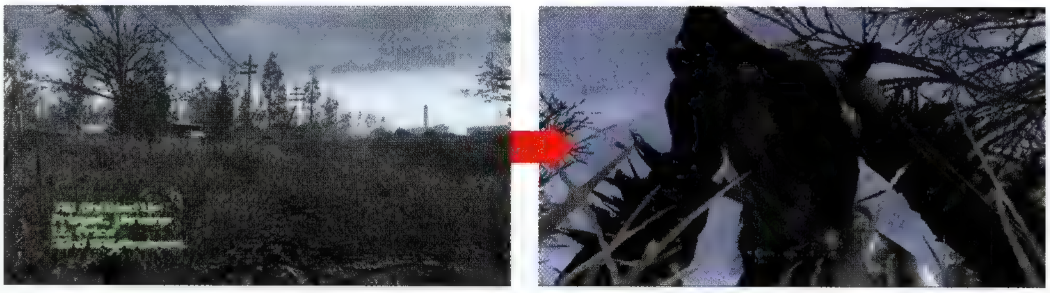
From afar, they look like any other pair of Lombax ears. Zoom in and you can see every hair in perfect fuzz-o-vision, while in the background the cityscape crackles and fizzes. Awesome.

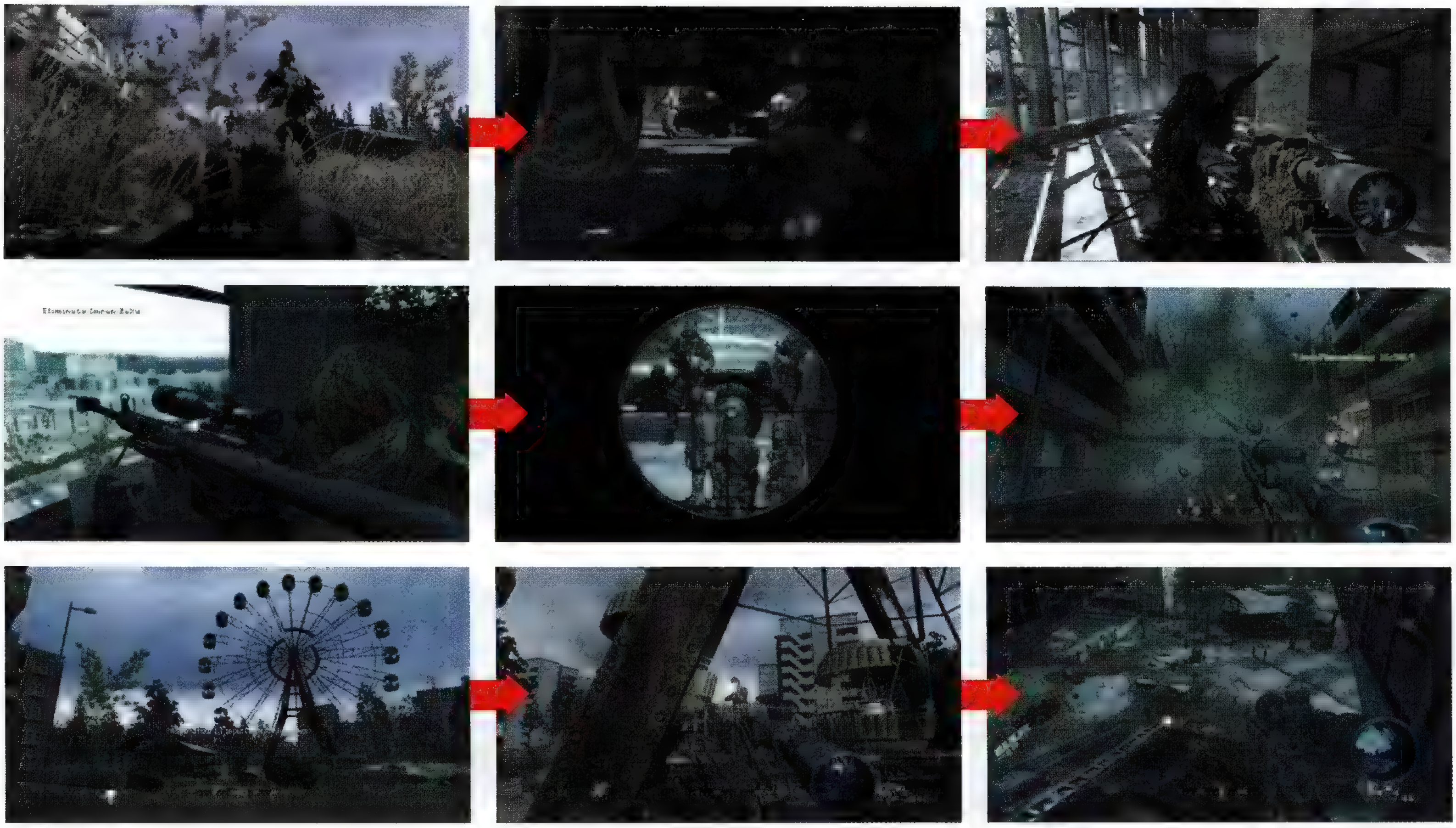


PSM3's defining moment of 2007

1 The Ghillie Suit level in *Call Of Duty 4*

Arguably, the best stealth level *ever*. flawlessly designed, sublimely paced and rammed with fabulous set-pieces; the chance to play (in flashback) as the revered Captain Price is, well, priceless. Then there's the sniping, the crawling beneath jeeps, the ferris wheel... we've raved about this already on a psm3mag.com blog, but it's a level design masterclass not seen since *Resi 4*.





PSM3's PS3 games of the year

Dan

1 Call Of Duty 4 A near-alchemic blend of bombastic set-pieces, and tight pacing.
2 Skate Nothing closer to skating's ingenuity.
3 Ratchet Familiar? Sure, but insanely polished.

Milf

1 Ratchet TOD Fantastic and *actually* funny blaster. Top-notch stuff.
2 Call Of Duty 4 Frantic FPS action of the highest *calibre*. Ba-dum ching...
3 The Orange Box Best value game ever? You bet.

Richard

1 Ratchet TOD Playing Challenge Mode now, and the game still feels fresh.
2 Call Of Duty 4 Has set the benchmark for next gen FPS's. Truly brilliant.
3 Drake's A solid, entertaining adventure.

Dave

1 Call Of Duty 4 Best FPS ever? Perhaps.
2 MotorStorm It's still a ludicrously exciting, knockabout racing game.
3 Ratchet TOD A Ratchet whittled to near-perfection.

Nathan

1 Call Of Duty 4 The most polished game on PS3. A real must-have.
2 Ratchet TOD Platform games still have a place in the next-gen universe.
3 Skate EA redefine the skating genre.

Andy

1 Oblivion Deep, hilarious, massive - everything an RPG should be.
2 Skate Slick, intuitive controls. Superb.
3 Call Of Duty 4 Engaging story and ballsy, mind-blowing action

Vote for your Games Of The Year

Vote and win in the PSM3 Reader Awards

Yes, it's your chance to vote in the 2007 PSM3 Reader Awards. Think *Resistance* was game of the year? Or *Ratchet, MotorStorm, Orange Box, CoD4* or *Drake's Fortune*? Or maybe you think that, actually, *Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer* was a landmark in game design? Well, after you've had your brain checked out by a doctor, get voting in the PSM3 Reader Awards. We'll need you to choose your top three in the following categories: **PS3 Game Of The Year, PS2 Game Of The Year, PSP Game Of The Year, Publisher Of The Year, Developer Of The Year, Disappointment Of The Year, Unsung Hero, Best Online Game and Defining Moment of 2007.**

The developers and publishers that triumph in each category will receive a shiny trophy. We've had them made specially, and paid for them out of our own wages (not really). And what's in it for you? One lucky entrant out of the hat will get a copy of each winning game, plus some office ~~tat~~ 'gifts', worth over £400 in total.

How to vote

Voting is easy – simply head over to psm3mag.com and cast your votes there. Or tap your answers into an email (including your name and postal address), and zap it over to psm3@futurenet.co.uk, subject heading 'PSM3 2007 Awards'.

Be sure to get your entries in by Monday January 7, and we'll announce the winners in issue 98, out on February 14. What a Valentine's Day that'll be, eh?

PlayStation®

Official Magazine - UK

PlayStation®
Official Magazine - UK
WORLD EXCLUSIVE REVIEW
Burnout Paradise
FALLOUT 3 EXCLUSIVE
ROCK BAND REVIEWED
ALL-NEW FFXIII SHOTS
PS3 GAME OF THE YEAR
PLAYSTATION 3
BLU-RAY DISC INSIDE!
25 PLAYSTATION 3 GAMES TO PLAY NOW!
FEATURING Ratchet & Clank: TOD / PES 2008 / The Simpsons / Tony Hawk's Proving Ground
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RATCHET & CLANK TOOLS OF DESTRUCTION
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18
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Playable Blu-ray disc 25 PS3 games to play including Ratchet & Clank: TOD, Tony Hawk's Proving Ground, The Simpsons Game, and PES 2008.

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This month: world exclusive Burnout Paradise review, new Fallout 3 and FFXIII shots, plus all of 2008's biggest PS3 games previewed.

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PSM3 Reviews

Instant PlayStation justice

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Start

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SingStar Bollywood 81

> **"Lags so far behind *CoD4*"**
>
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60 Uncharted: Drake's Fortune

74 Timeshift

PSM3 review scoring system

Score	Rating	Description
0-29	**Rubbish**	An absolute stinker and an insult to gaming. The makers should be ashamed.
30-49	**Poor**	Why did they do that? Some simple playtesting could have worked wonders.
50-69	**All right**	Hey it works, and we can see what they were trying to do. And that's about it.
70-84	**Good**	Worth playing, especially if you're a fan of the genre. It just lacks that touch of greatness.
85-89	**Superb**	This is the sweet spot. If a game scores in this zone it's definitely worth your money.
90+	**Amazing**	You must get this. Failure to do so would mean missing out on a real console classic.

PSM3 BUY IT

The Award
If you see this, then you should buy that game.

The Team

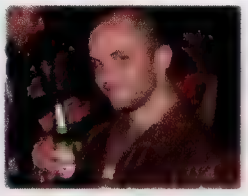
Should folk like this be free to walk the streets?

Daniel Dawkins
Specialist in Extreme sports, phallic cigar photos.
Playing *CoD4:* "Captain Price has changed my views on *everything*"

Nathan Irvine
Specialist in Sports games, Leo Sayer impersonations.
Playing *Rock Band:* "It makes me feel like dancing. And rocking."

Andy Kelly
Specialist in Role-playing games, 'superstar' DJing.
Playing *Uncharted:* "The jungle *is* all fun and games. And death."

David Cook
Specialist in Shooters, being slightly taller than a kangaroo.
Playing *PES:* "But I'm not as tall as an elephant. Zoos are *fun*."



Joel Snape
Specialist in Beat-'em-ups, Pretending not to be drunk.
Playing *Rock Band:* "Wuh? Drumsh? Rocckk... 'nother beer..."

Duncan Harris
Specialist in Shooters, looking like the grumpiest man alive.
Playing *Orange Box:* "Leave me alone. I'm busy. Go on, get *lost*..."

Disagree with our reviews? Email your outraged rant to **psm3@futurenet.co.uk**

Pub EA | **Dev** Harmonix
Price $150 | **Release** Out now (US)
Multi-player 1-4

ON THE DISC

Rock Band

It's time for the gig of your life

IMPORT

Your friends are idiots. You've probably had your suspicions for a while, but *Rock Band*'s going to confirm them. Getting a game going in a room full of drunk people is like trying to organise a chimp's tea party where the Darjeeling's laced with smack – everybody keeps prodding buttons and accidentally flicking through menus and quitting out, and it's all you can do not to shout at them to just STOP TOUCHING ANYTHING. Grr.

The hardest bit of *Rock Band* is explaining to the people who've never played games before that they need to press ⊗ to start even if they're only on the mic. Clods. It's worth persevering, though, because once you get into the game it'll bring you all together better than going on a road trip to Tijuana and finding a dead body. It's brilliant like that. There are moments – loads of them – where you honestly feel like a proper band, putting those back-to-back moments from *Guitar Hero* to shame.

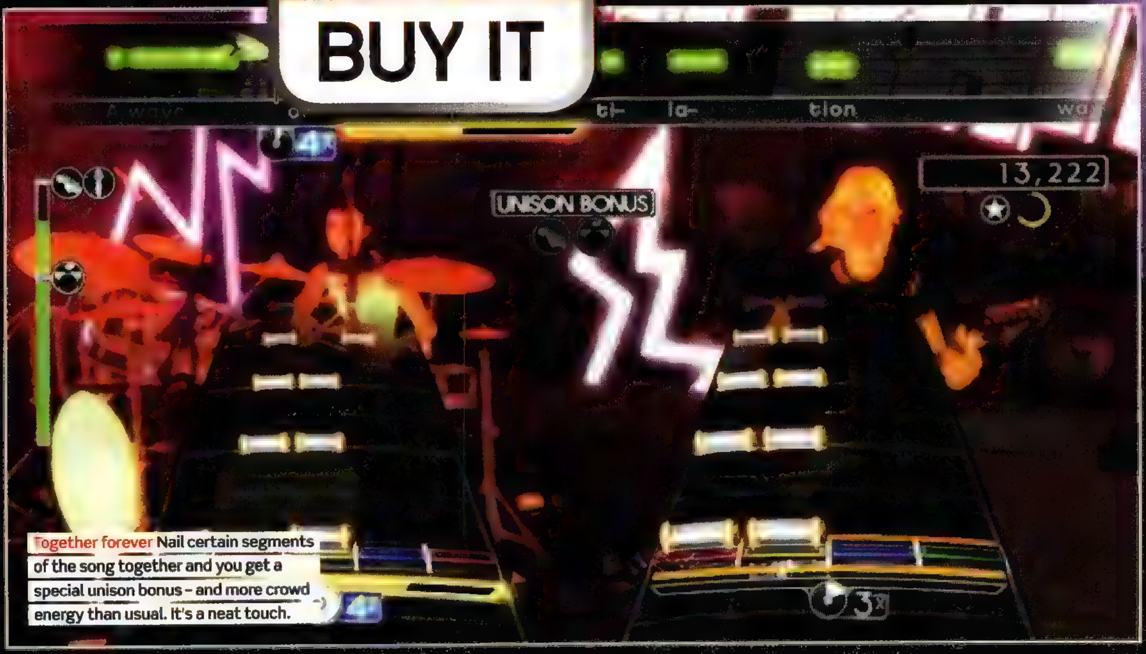
Axe maniacs

Guitar first, then. This is a contentious one, since it's directly comparable to a game that's already out – and the comparison doesn't always work in *Rock Band*'s favour. Basics are exactly the same – five buttons (although you only use four in Medium), a whammy bar for scoring extra when you hold notes, multipliers for playing ten notes in a row. Star Power's been renamed Overdrive, but one sweet addition is that you can carry on building it up after it's activated – keep hitting those phrases and you can keep your bonus time going for ages. The display also goes blue to show when you're in a solo and ticks off the percentage you've managed so you know how long you've got to survive in the tricky bits.

These are nice touches, but they're minor adjustments to the near-flawless system Harmonix developed for *Guitar Hero* – and other changes don't work quite so well. Instead of *GH*'s friendly circles, *Rock Band* shows notes as little metal bars, and ever-so-slightly thinner ones to show where you can do hammer-ons. Weirdly, early screenshots showed a layout much closer to Guitar Hero's – it's like EA's lawyers panicked at the last minute and insisted on new graphics that look a bit placeholder. It doesn't really matter – the system still works fine – but it feels a little bit sterile.

›

PSM3 BUY IT



Together forever Nail certain segments of the song together and you get a special unison bonus – and more crowd energy than usual. It's a neat touch.

Thanks to MJ at the Giant Party Shop, Bath, for the outfits. Tel: 01225 336632

KNOW IT NOW

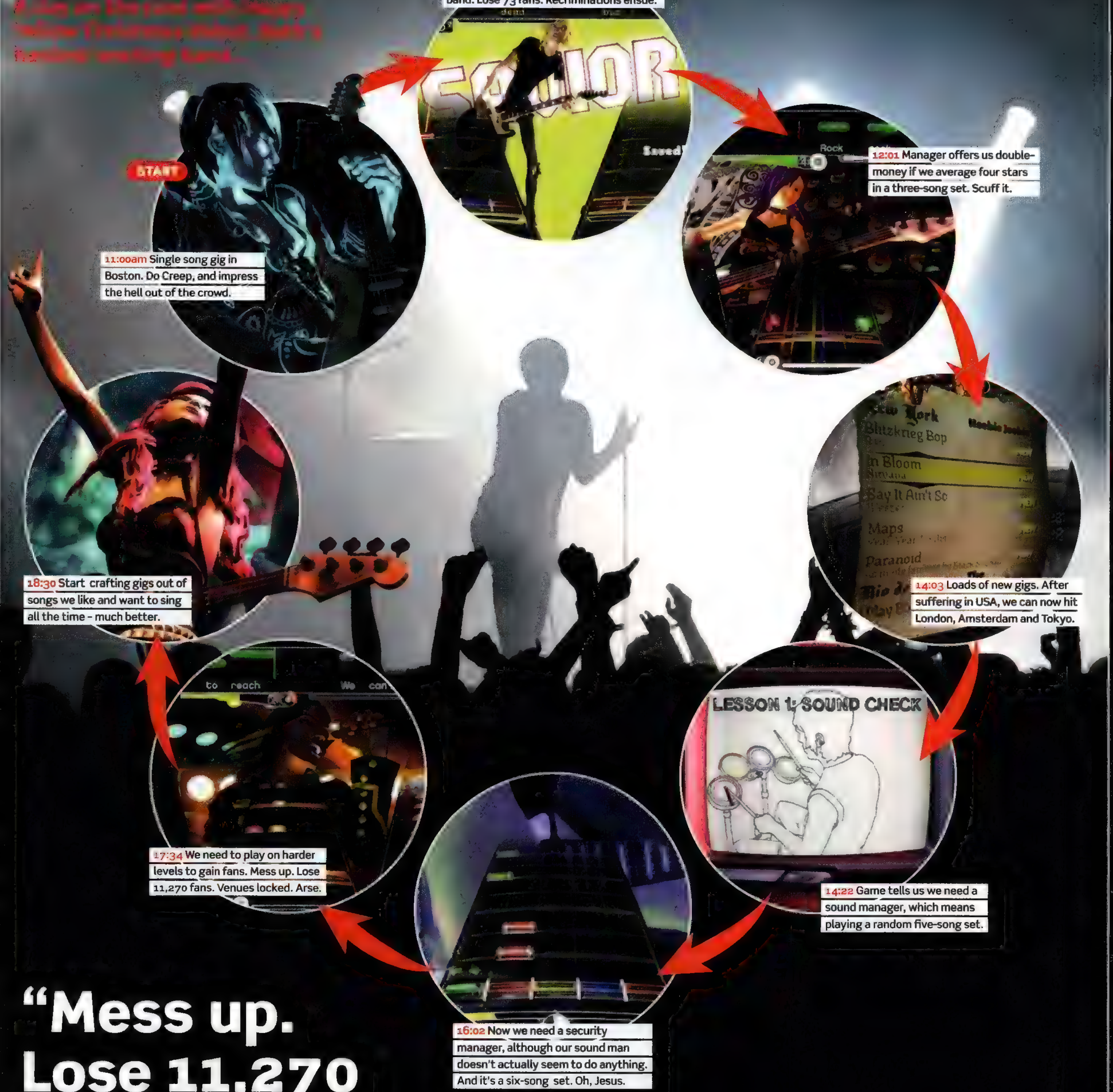
- 58 songs, 51 taken from master tracks? ☑
- The noisiest drum peripheral ever? ☑
- A slightly bodged-up Career mode? ☑
- Anything as hard as Cowboys From Hell? ☒

"There are moments when you feel like a proper band"

Career mode

Tour diary

A day on the road with [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] band…


START
Rock
Saved
New York
Blitzkrieg Bop
In Bloom
Say It Ain't So
Maps
Paranoid
LESSON 1: SOUND CHECK
to reach
We can

11:00am Single song gig in Boston. Do Creep, and impress the hell out of the crowd.

11:45 Drummer ambitiously chooses Hard, immediately crashes out of Suffragette City despite saves from the rest of the band. Lose 73 fans. Recriminations ensue.

12:01 Manager offers us double-money if we average four stars in a three-song set. Scuff it.

14:03 Loads of new gigs. After suffering in USA, we can now hit London, Amsterdam and Tokyo.

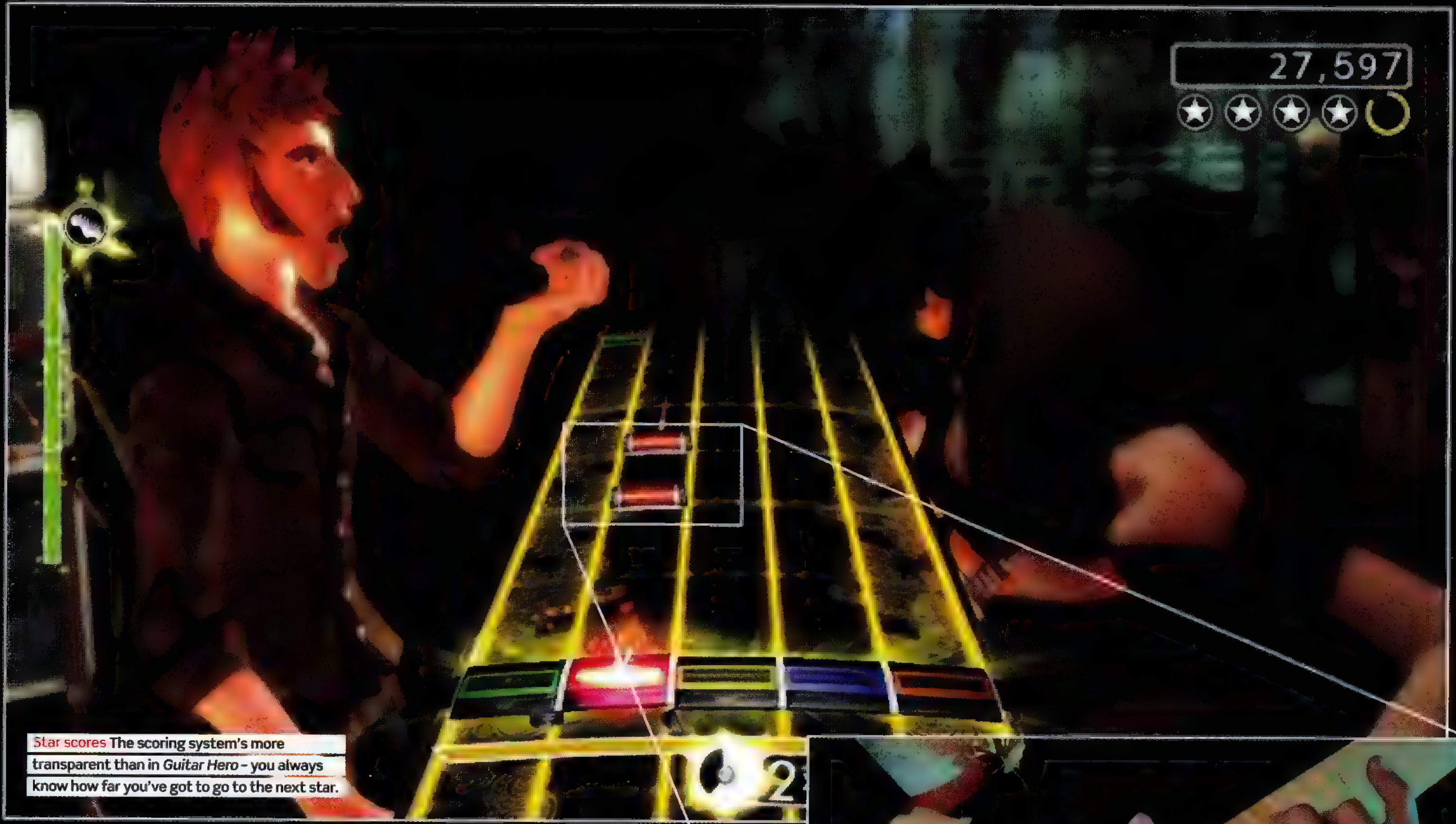
14:22 Game tells us we need a sound manager, which means playing a random five-song set.

16:02 Now we need a security manager, although our sound man doesn't actually seem to do anything. And it's a six-song set. Oh, Jesus.

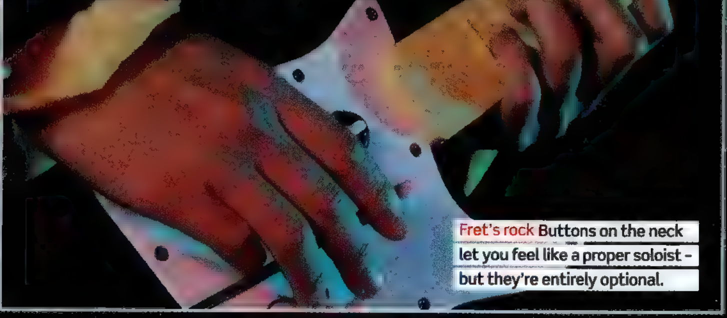
17:34 We need to play on harder levels to gain fans. Mess up. Lose 11,270 fans. Venues locked. Arse.

18:30 Start crafting gigs out of songs we like and want to sing all the time – much better.

> "Mess up. Lose 11,270 fans. Arse"



Star scores The scoring system's more transparent than in *Guitar Hero* - you always know how far you've got to go to the next star.



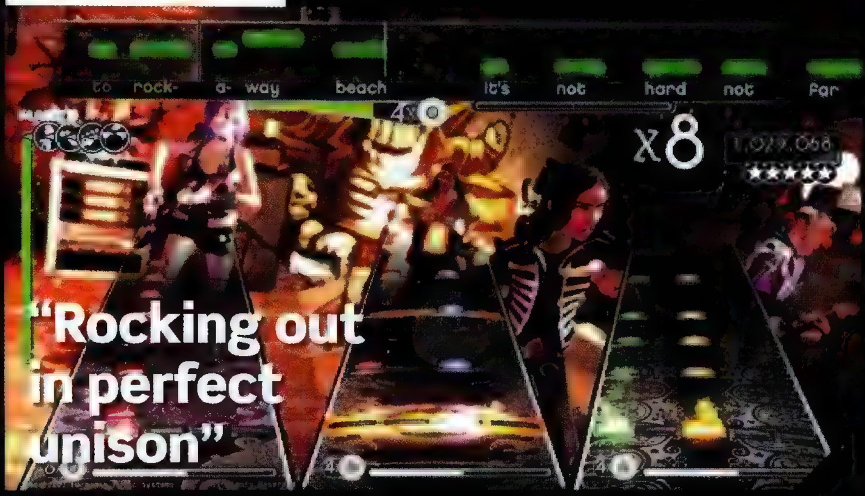
Fret's rock Buttons on the neck let you feel like a proper soloist - but they're entirely optional.

Drumming's the next stop, since it's new and comes with the nicest toys. And the drum kit really is lovely - solid and chunky, the legs on the kit are like scaffolding and the foot pedal puts *DrumMania*'s to shame. One warning - the drums are solid plastic, so unless you wrap your (wooden) sticks in something they'll drown out the TV. Drums are also by far the trickiest instrument to play - getting your foot and hands to work independently is absolutely brain-twanging at first, and you'll sometimes have to stop mid-song, take a deep breath and start tackling bits of the beat one at a time. This is probably a good place to point out that *Rock Band*'s difficulty is slightly different from *Guitar Hero*'s - it'll kick you out of the game faster if you start scuffing things, but it's also quicker to get your energy bar back to full with a quick flurry of perfect notes. If you're really messing things up on drums, you can afford to just concentrate on the snare and bass pedal, which give up more energy than the others. By the higher difficulty levels, playing drums on Rock Band is probably about as hard as playing them in real life - it's a very different feeling from the lightning-fingered fun of riffing through a guitar solo, but satisfying in a different way.

Band aid

If you do make an unrecoverable cock-up of things, your mates can actually help you out. Crash out of a song and one of your band chums can activate Overdrive to bring you back in - as long as they've got enough juice they can do this twice, effectively giving you three 'lives'. Unfortunately, it's not so easy to return the favour - on drums, you activate Overdrive by doing a drum roll and cymbal clash at selected bits of song, which is excellent when you're going for a score multiplier but not so good when

Fave Feature



"Rocking out in perfect unison"

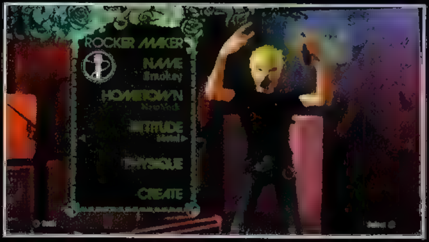
Keep On Rocking

Fans of the bonus tunes from the first two *Guitar Heroes* will be pleased to see the return of Vagiant, Honest Bob, the Acro-Brats, Bang Camaro and Freezepop on the bonus tracklist.

you're making the save. Certain songs have almost no fills and you've got limited time to bring your bandmate back in before you're booed off the stage. A better alternative is to activate Overdrive while your fret-man's still clinging on – it'll give him slightly more energy than usually for nailing notes, and hopefully let him muddle through the tricky bits. It's a lopsided system, but tactical – and it'll craft your band into a tight-knit group. Hopefully, anyway.

The singing's brilliant. Instead of pasting up whole lines like in *SingStar*, it scrolls lyrics across the screen like *Karaoke Revolution*, but that isn't really why. You can pat the mic to do percussion bits in long instrumental sections, but that isn't really why either. No, the really inspired bit is the Overdrive activation – some sections without words are marked in gold, and making a noise in these fires you into bonus time. Hold the note you're already singing, whoop "Hello, New York!", introduce your drummer or just swear at the crowd – there's a legitimate reason for doing it, and it's an absolutely inspired touch. There are also talky sections where you simply have to read out the words without matching their pitch – and they work fine, like little relaxing little presents amid the often tough singing.

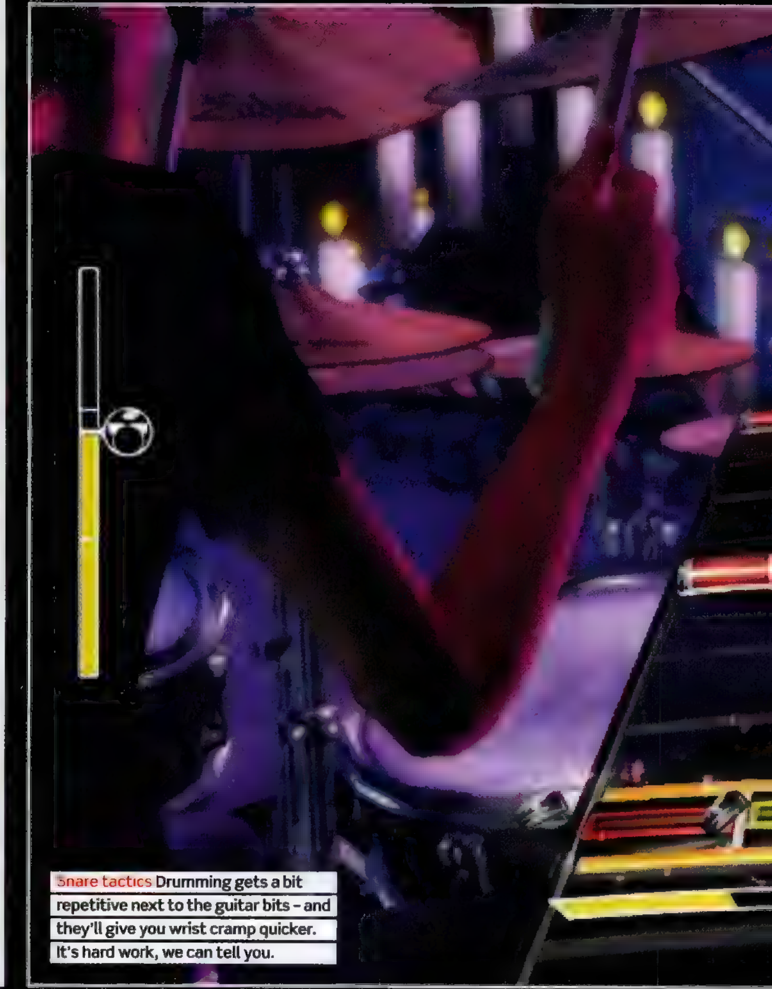
Crowd Control
Do well in a song like Radiohead's Creep or Metallica's Enter Sandman, and the crowd starts to sing along when you hit the chorus. Sadly, they don't get any louder if you scream "Come on, Los Angeles!" We tried.



Rock off Bandmates can drop in and out of World Tour, but the leader always has to play his chosen instrument.

Music career

This would probably all work fine absolutely if you simply unlocked songs and went for high scores, but *Rock Band* goes for something slightly more ambitious – and slightly muddles things – with its Career mode. Instead of doing individual songs, you do whole gigs – made up of random tunes, venue-specific set lists or your own mix of favoured songs. As you earn fans you get the



Snare tactics Drumming gets a bit repetitive next to the guitar bits – and they'll give you wrist cramp quicker. It's hard work, we can tell you.

Pick a side

Rock Band Vs Guitar Hero

Solo majesty, or power in numbers? What are the differences, and which is the game for you?

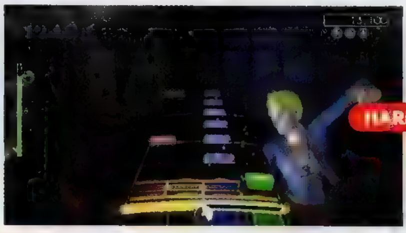
ROCK BAND | **GUITAR HERO**

GUITARS

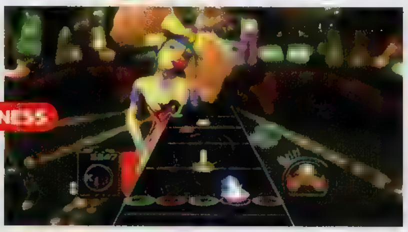
Strum do Some players claim it's easier to slide across the buttons. A noiseless strum bar eliminates irritating clicks, but stops you being sure you've played a note.

Clicked off It's much easier to nail entire solos on the Gibsons, partly because of their dependable clickiness. We'll take reliability over style.

HARDNESS

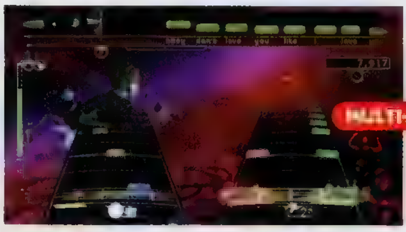


Beat it The choice for masochists is drumming, which takes months to master. There's nothing as hard as Jordan or Play With Me in RB's tracklist, though.



Tough as nails The later songs on Hard and Expert are less like fun and more like a giant chain-mail gauntlet thrown onto your gaming table.

MULTI-PLAYER

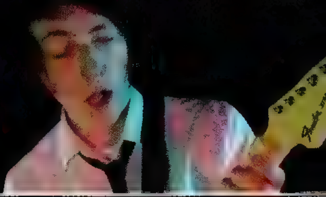


Party hard There's no getting around it: *Rock Band*'s the winner here. If you're having a party, there's only one game everyone's will find something they like on.

Man-on-man Battle mode's a bit of a mess, but GH is still the game for duelling. Not so much for social gatherings, more for competitive men living in a flat.

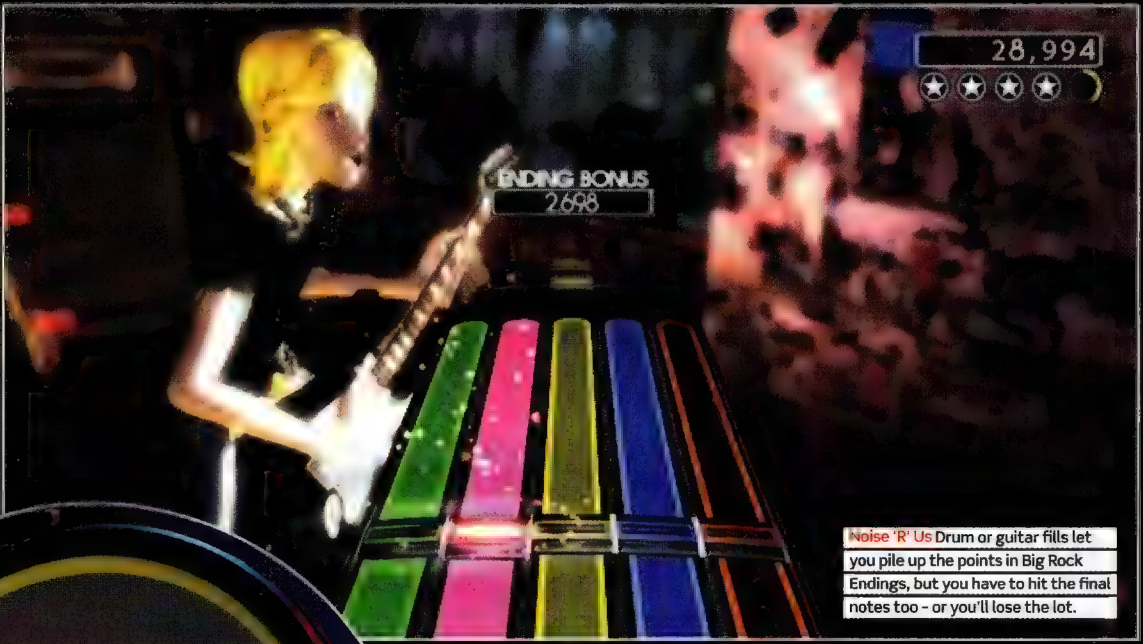
OVERALL

The decision's simple, really – if you're regularly going to have enough people over to form a band, then *Rock Band*'s the right choice. The introduction of other people gives *RB* a magic that you can't ever make with nice song selections. However, if you're on your own or there's just a couple of you – a far more likely scenario – *GH* is the winner. *Guitar Hero* is tighter and sharper, and – just – the better game.

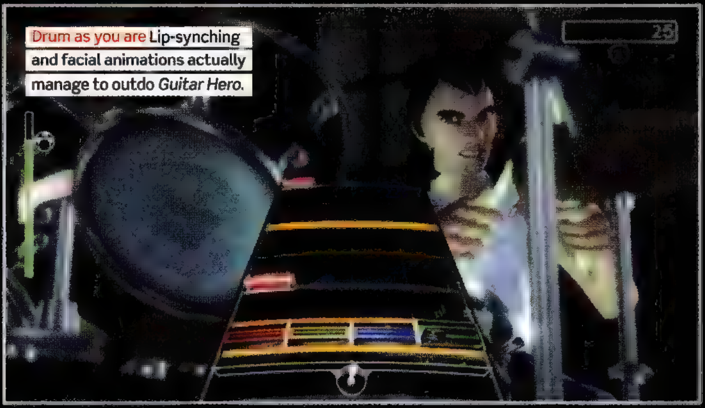


chance to play bigger gigs and get more cash, but the risks are also greater - and that's sort of where problems kick in. After a point, *Rock Band* simply won't let you get any further without you having to switch to Hard or Expert difficulty, and with the drums being so difficult, this is where your progress is going to stall. You also lose fans for failing, which locks certain venues again and sort of discourages you from trying to tackle songs out of your skill range. It's a nice idea - and effectively endless - but crippled by presentational missteps. Oh, and until you start downloading song packs, be prepared to spend a lot of time grinding through the same songs time and again, one's you'll eventually come to completely hate, just like a real rock band - we really don't care if we never have to hear Nirvana's In Bloom ever again.

But while it's fine to talk about all the technical stuff, but what it doesn't really get across is the heart of *Rock Band*. The fun of the game comes from playing with friends, and when you play properly it's phenomenal. Helping each other get through the tricky bits of Enter Sandman is great - letting each player shine in their own sections of Reptilia is even better. And even if the rest of your flawless four-piece isn't around, no-one can resist the lure of Rock Band - whether it's girls who don't normally play games or (honestly) that one crazy neighbour from downstairs who usually complains about the noise. It's already a great game - and once the song packs get going, it'll be unstoppable. Yes, your friends might be idiots, but you're going to love them. **Joel Snape**



Noise 'R' Us Drum or guitar fills let you pile up the points in Big Rock Endings, but you have to hit the final notes too - or you'll lose the lot.



Drum as you are Lip-synching and facial animations actually manage to outdo *Guitar Hero*.

Keep It Cymbal Muffle those drums up, or the neighbours *will* complain.

Hair play

Character creation doesn't have the options you'd expect of an EA game, but you can't fault a game that offers a flawless Keith Moon bowl cut.

PSM3 Verdict

ROCK BAND
PLAYSTATION 3

***Rock Band* contains...**

About 12 brilliant songs | Lots of indie | Proof The Clash were the best band ever

Overall Perhaps the best party game ever – if a little less cohesive than *GH*. Still, vital.

88

Pub Sony | **Dev** Naughty Dog
Price £45 | **Release** December 7
Multi-player None

ON THE DISC
We'll review Uncharted on next month's disc
[illegible]

Uncharted: Drake's Fortune

Naughty Dog's hidden treasure is finally unearthed

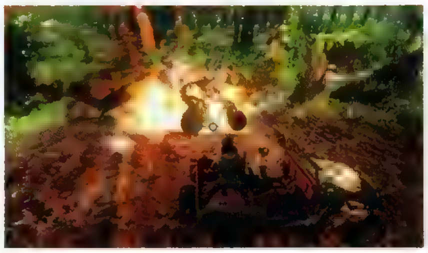
The moment *Uncharted* blinks to life your eyes are overwhelmed with colour. You're stood aboard Drake's diving boat in the middle of the Pacific Ocean and it looks sensational – the sky's a piercing cerulean blue, golden sunlight shimmers across the water's surface… it's like an interactive holiday brochure. Well, until the pirates arrive. Then it's like a scene from Waterworld as a fleet of rusty fishing boats pull up and its crew climbs aboard clutching AK-47s.

This level pretty much sums up *Uncharted* – moments of stunning beauty interrupted by cinematic action. If you were expecting lengthy *Tomb Raider*-style platforming sections, forget it; *Drake's Fortune* is, above all, a shoot-'em-up. You'll spend more of the game pinned to the sides of stone pillars for cover than leaping between them. This takes a while to sink in and you'll yearn to explore the island at your own pace, but the sooner you resign yourself to the fact that this is an action game and not an adventure, the sooner you can settle down and enjoy it.

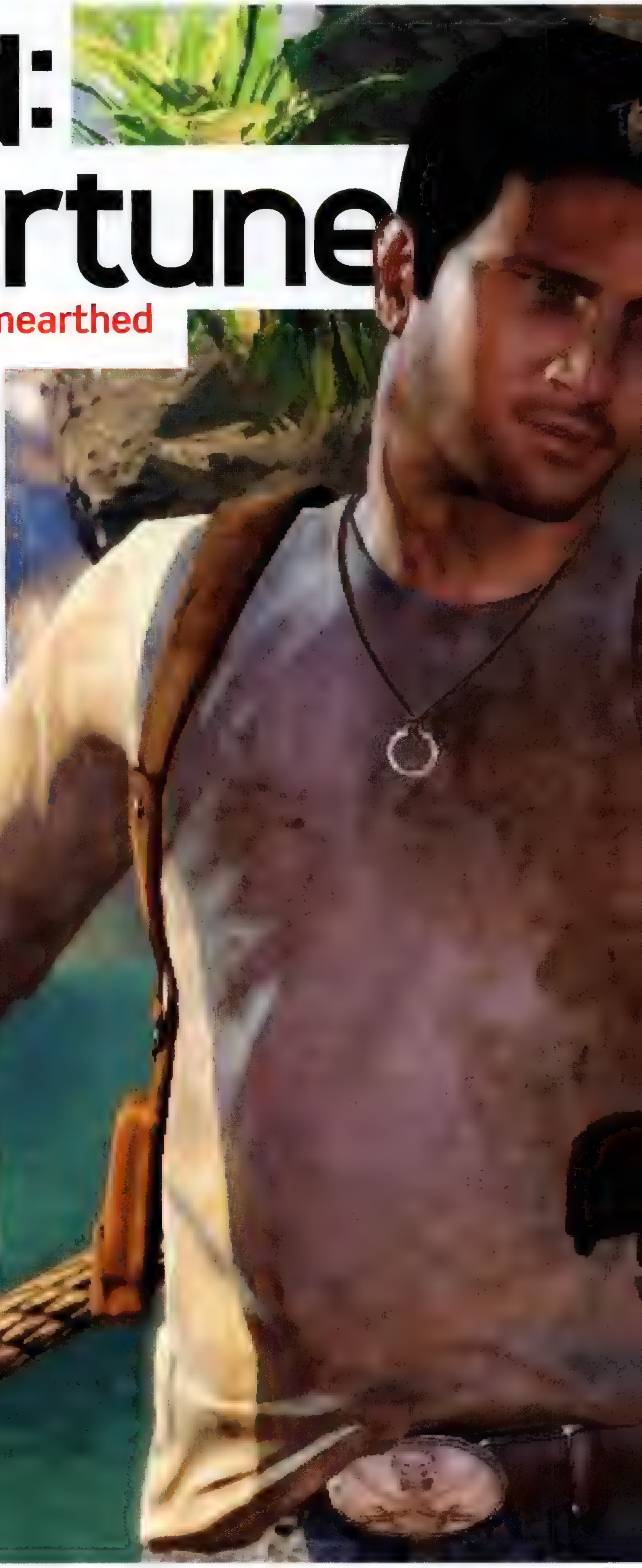
Drake district

The story concerns Nathan Drake, an adventurer on the trail of the lost treasure of El Dorado using clues left by his ancestor, the legendary explorer Sir Francis Drake. He has all the qualities of a generic knucklehead action hero – skilled with weapons, athletic, handsome, square jaw – but he's also a bumbling nitwit who never really seems that confident in what he's doing. This makes him instantly likeable and a delightful change from the monotone crew-cut nobodies we're used to nudging about in games. The quality of the cut-scenes is staggering, as is the script and voice acting.

But, like we said earlier, most of the game is spent shooting people. This could have easily been its downfall had the cover-to-cover combat system not been so damn intuitive. Whenever Drake's



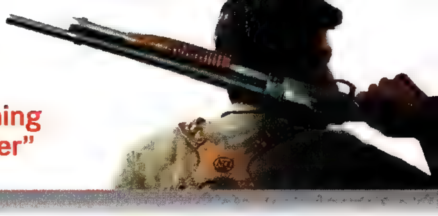
Blown away Drake fires grenades while Elena clumsily barrels through the jungle in a stolen jeep.

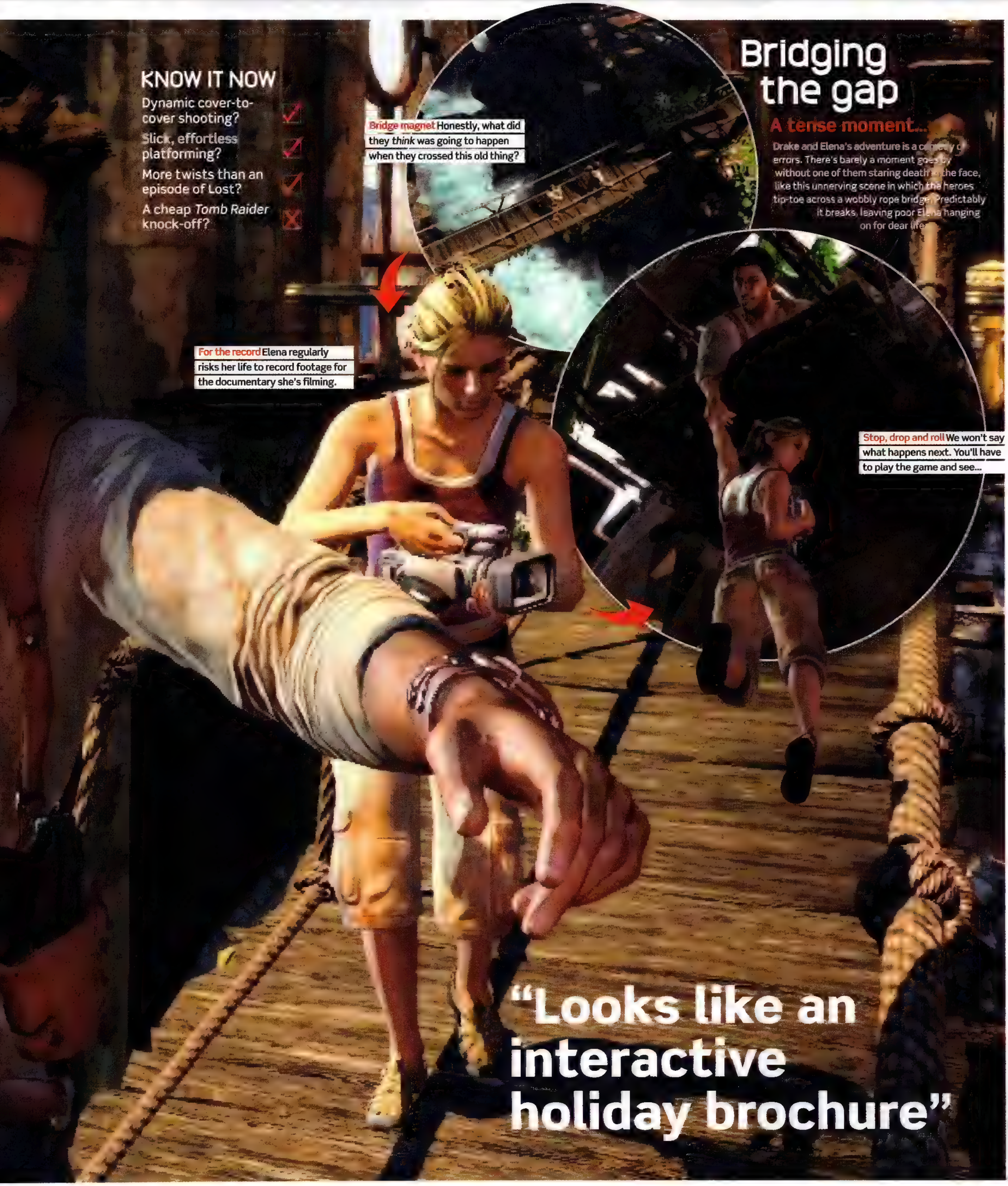


PSM3
BUY IT

Uncharted

"Forget lengthy platforming sections – this is a shooter"





KNOW IT NOW

- Dynamic cover-to-cover shooting? ✓
- Slick, effortless platforming? ✓
- More twists than an episode of Lost? ✓
- A cheap *Tomb Raider* knock-off? ✗

Bridge magnet Honestly, what did they *think* was going to happen when they crossed this old thing?

For the record Elena regularly risks her life to record footage for the documentary she's filming.

Bridging the gap

A tense moment...

Drake and Elena's adventure is a comedy of errors. There's barely a moment goes by without one of them staring death in the face, like this unnerving scene in which the heroes tip-toe across a wobbly rope bridge. Predictably it breaks, leaving poor Elena hanging on for dear life.

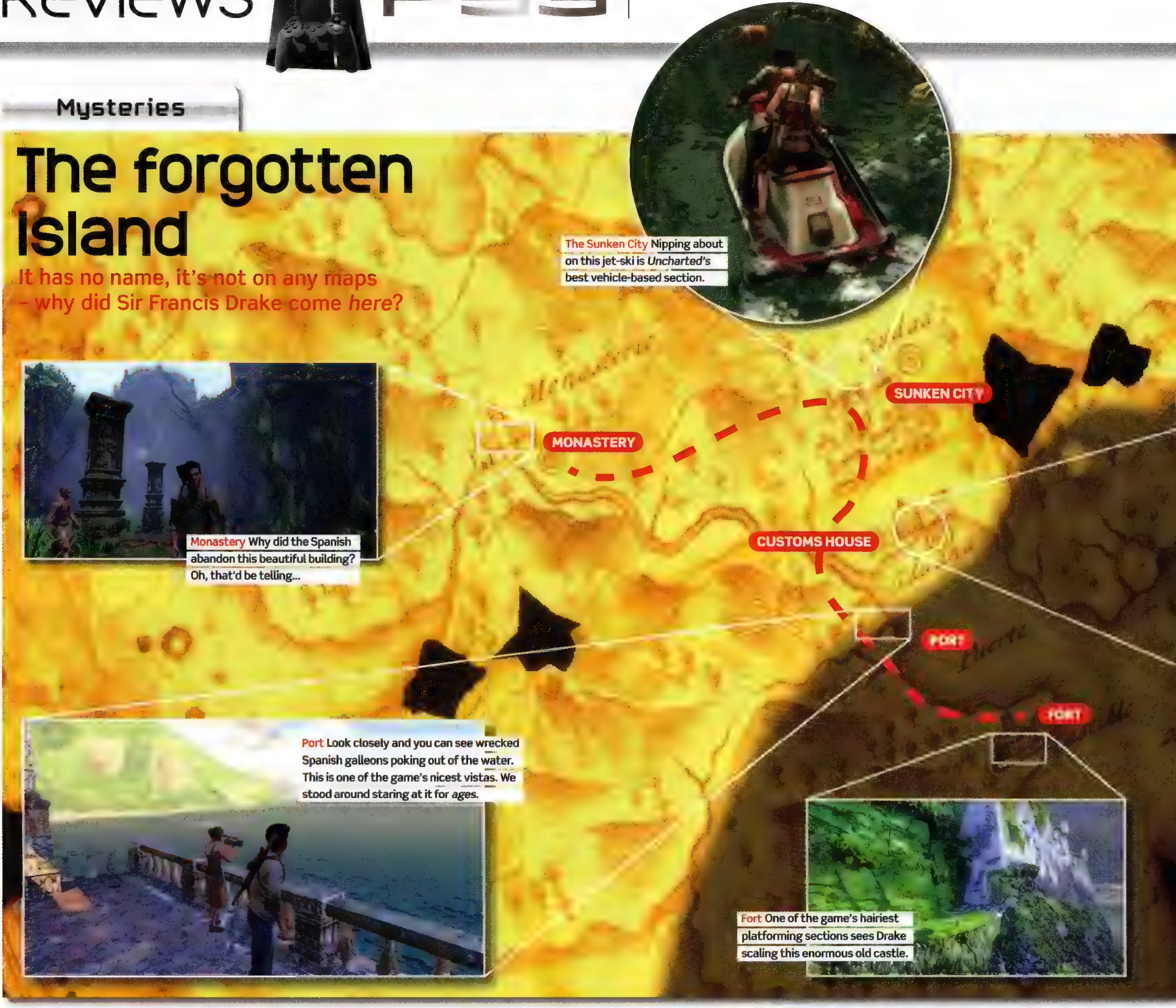
Stop, drop and roll We won't say what happens next. You'll have to play the game and see...

> "Looks like an interactive holiday brochure"

Mysteries

The forgotten Island

It has no name, it's not on any maps – why did Sir Francis Drake come *here*?



The Sunken City Nipping about on this jet-ski is *Uncharted's* best vehicle-based section.

Monastery Why did the Spanish abandon this beautiful building? Oh, that'd be telling...

Port Look closely and you can see wrecked Spanish galleons poking out of the water. This is one of the game's nicest vistas. We stood around staring at it for *ages*.

Fort One of the game's hairiest platforming sections sees Drake scaling this enormous old castle.

near cover, press ◎ and he'll snap to it. So if you're running towards a low wall and someone starts firing, jab the button and he'll skid intelligently towards it and lock to a safe position. If you need to move to another piece of cover – if, for example, that crate you're cowering behind is being torn apart by gunfire – just press ◎ again and you'll dive to the next available object.

View to a kill Yes, *Uncharted* looks *this* good. This isn't a cut-scene, this is actually in the middle of a level.

To pop up and fire you squeeze L1 and control the crosshair with the right analogue stick. To pop back, let go of L1. It's so incredibly simple, yet most developers can't seem to nail it. Naughty Dog have, despite only having ever made platformers before. The only problem is that enemies take an inhuman amount of ammunition to drop. Often, even if you fire directly at an enemy's head, the game rarely registers that you've hit him, making it feel a bit like pot luck. Other than that, it's brilliant.

Jump to it

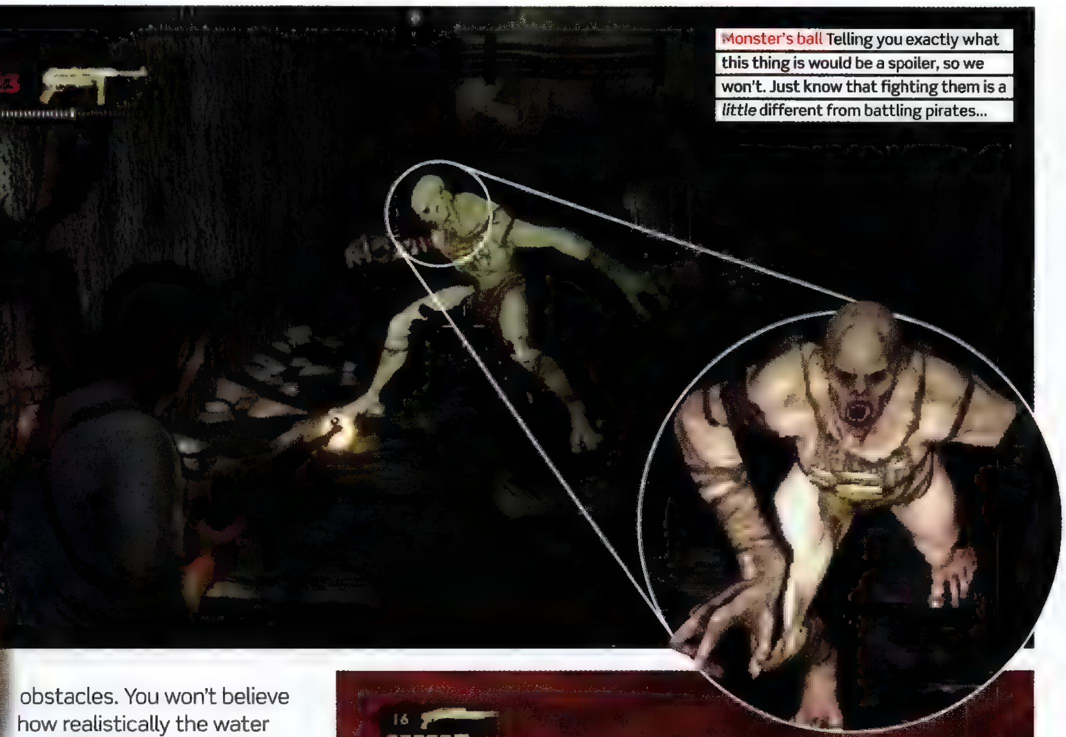
The platforming sections aren't quite as impressive as the shooting bits – the control scheme is near-identical to those of *Prince Of Persia* and *Tomb Raider Legend*, if slightly more forgiving – but the vast amount of animations applied to Drake as he clambers about make it look 10 times more realistic. The path from the beginning of one platforming section to the end is disappointingly linear though – you can tell instantly where you're supposed to be jumping to, as opposed to picking your own route up a seemingly impossible cliff-face, like how it should've been. But since there's so little of it compared to the gunplay, it's not that much of an issue overall.

Awards ceremony **You earn points for combat skills – headshots etc. – which unlock a huge amount of really interesting 'making of' documentaries.**

Vehicle sections help break up the action. The best sees you riding a jet-ski through a gorgeous sunken city while your unwitting sidekick and love interest Elena rides on the back firing a grenade launcher at enemies. You drive and fire at the same time, and in one particularly hairy set-piece you have to carve up roaring river rapids, battling the waves and dodging explosive

"A character and a game rife with personality and colour"

The Customs House The architecture in this grandiose building is stunning, but it's swarming with maniacal pirates who ruin the rustic charm somewhat.



Monster's ball Telling you exactly what this thing is would be a spoiler, so we won't. Just know that fighting them is a *little* different from battling pirates...

Mood music The unique colours and atmosphere give *Drake's* its own distinct personality.

obstacles. You won't believe how realistically the water moves, looks and sounds. There's also an on-rails shooting bit reminiscent of the bike chase at the end of *MGS3*, but it's probably the worst, least imaginative level in the entire game.

Good, *Fortune*

Uncharted sticks to a handful of simplistic ideas, but because the levels are so varied, packed with detail and gorgeous to look at it, the game never gets repetitive. It's relentless in its quest to entertain, and whenever you feel like you're settling into a routine it surprises you. Even the way the weapons are revealed makes the game's numerous firefights feel fresh – you move gradually from using lame pistols to attacking with M4 assault rifles and sniper rifles. It's close to perfectly-paced.

The leap from *Jak* to this is vast. Naughty Dog have mastered the PS3 hardware where others have struggled. Uncharted is tantalisingly unique, from its setting and characters to its exemplary cover system and vibrant setting. A handful of bland levels and an over-reliance on explosive barrel-based 'puzzles' make it feel a little rough sometimes, but we can guarantee that if you buy this, you'll love it. Rather than pander to what's accepted as 'cool', Naughty Dog have created a character and a game rife with personality and colour. From your first striking blue sky to the rain-lashed final battle, *Drake's Fortune* is unforgettable. **Andy Kelly**

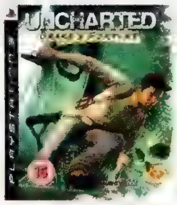
Fave Feature

"Unleashing brutal melee combos"

Punch out

Use ▢ and △ for combos. The attack depends on where the enemy is, so if they're near a wall Drake will pin them against it.

PSM3 Verdict



***Uncharted: Drake's Fortune* contains...**

Abandoned Nazi submarine bases

Monsters | Temples galore | Treasure

Overall Uniquely entertaining, if clichéd at times. Still, another reason to own a PS3.

89

Pub Sony | **Dev** Sony
Price £30 | **Release** Out now
Multi-player 1-8

ON THE DISC
We'll review *Logan's Shadow* on the next disc
PSP/Reviews

Fire fight Gabe is tough as old boots and can't be matched by the puny troops in early levels. So just stand your ground and exchange fire until the other guy drops.

You're mine You'll have to grab these mines and hold them back for your buddy in the submarine..

Syphon Filter: Logan's Shadow

PSP's premier hero just about stays afloat in his latest outing

KNOW IT NOW

Cover, fire, move, repeat?	✓
Lots and lots of underwater bits?	✓
A plot riddled with double-crosses?	✓
Better than the original?	✗

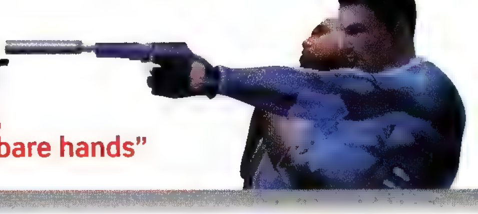
We're not saying that we hate the all-new '360 degrees of water exploration' – as Sony's press release calls it – but did they really need to fill *Logan's Shadow* with *so much* of the wet stuff? When you're not swimming through the sunken remains of a military ship you're doggy-paddling down a canal in Afghanistan or diving through turbines in hydro power plants. Gah. OK, these scenes look great, but they're dragged out too long. Still, PSP's number one action hero eventually steps onto dry land.

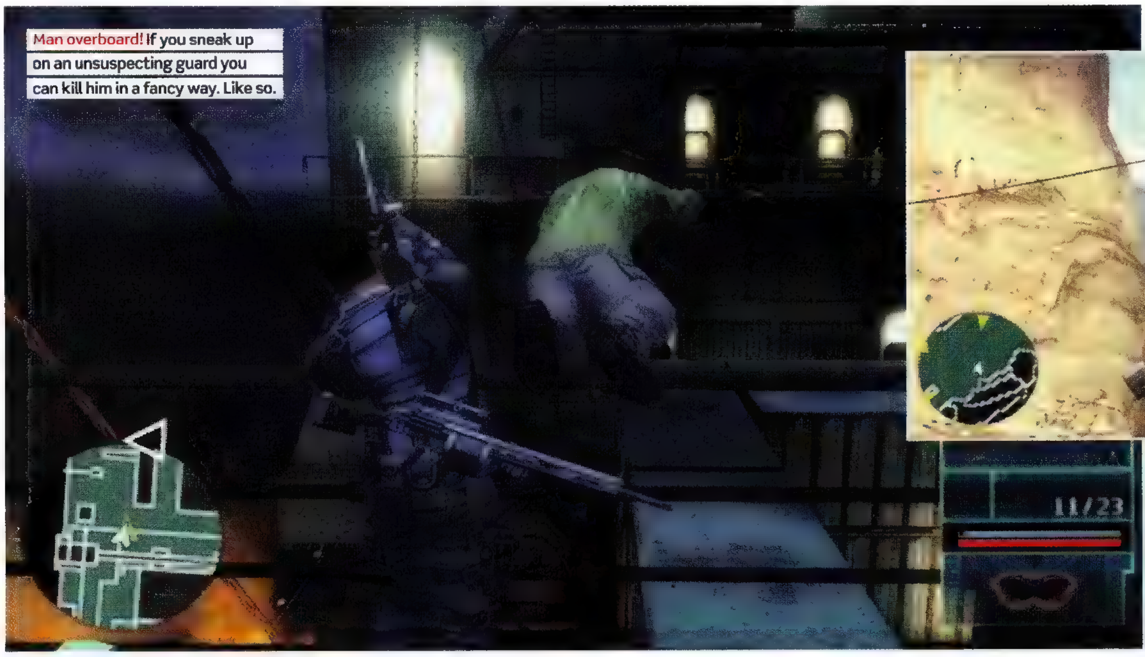
Building on the success of *Dark Mirror*, this new *Syphon Filter* sees Gabe Logan desperately trying to find both his secret agent partner Lian Xing, who's on the lam, and evil terrorist Bitar, who's rumoured to be hiding out in some caves in Afghanistan. Sound familiar? Bitar isn't exactly Bin Laden but the similarities are there, which is why you end up in the Middle East busting into underground dwellings in pursuit of freedom and trying to prevent him blowing up oil refineries in his dastardly plan.

Down in the depths

For his latest outing, Gabe has gained a few more tricks to help his cause, some good, some a bit crap. Fortunately, as you'll spend more time in the water than a dolphin, the swimming is pretty well done and you'll dive leagues below the surface to salvage important intel from a stricken ship. You can swim pretty much anywhere, like in *Tomb Raider*, all the while blasting thugs with your harpoon or specially adapted underwater bolt-gun. Another neat trick is being able to drag unsuspecting enemies into the water as they stand above it.

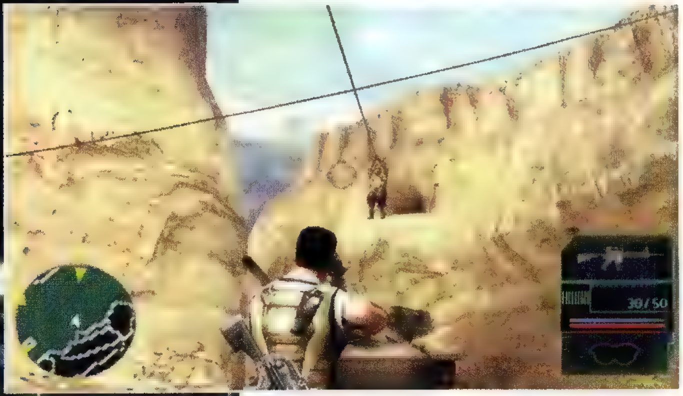
Best of all, are the environmental kills. They're not essential to the action, but if there's a bloke stood by a window you can throw him through it. Or see that guy standing a little to close to a flaming oven? You can sneak up and thrust his face into the heat. Ouch. Sadly, these aren't the most painful elements of *Logan's Shadow*. We're all for *God Of War*-style Quick Time Events usually, where you have to hammer buttons in a sequence to perform a special

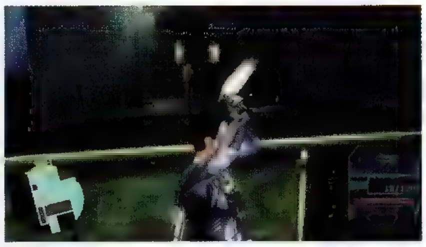


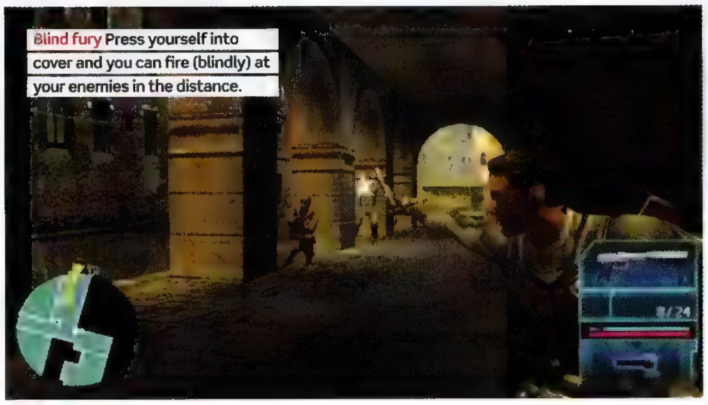


Man overboard! If you sneak up on an unsuspecting guard you can kill him in a fancy way. Like so.

Hanging around On the later levels, some enemies will swing into the action. Take them out before they land.







Blind fury Press yourself into cover and you can fire (blindly) at your enemies in the distance.

move, but here they're over-used and the work you have to put into them always seems much more than the effort Gabe's showing on-screen. For example, there's a bit where you have to drag a heavy metal door off its hinges and while you *batter* ⊗ the Special Ops expert just grabs onto the frame and yanks it off without breaking sweat. These segments feel tacked on and could have easily been left out.

In the shadows

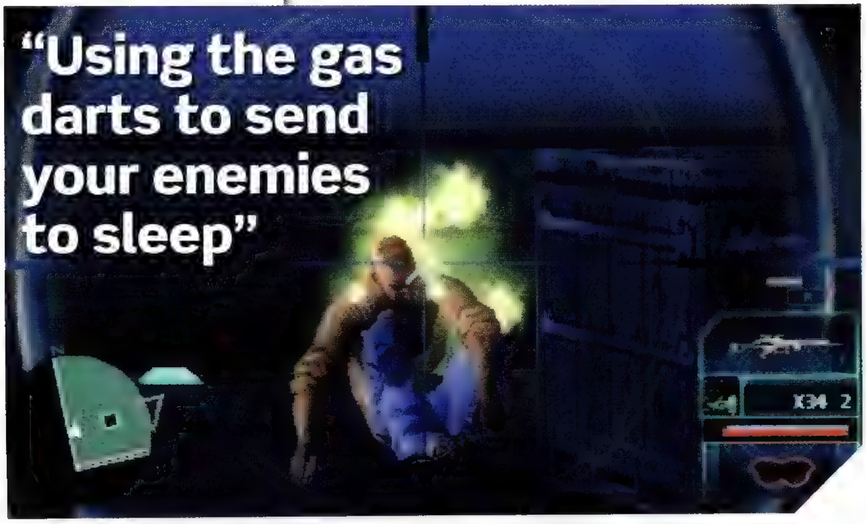
The most disappointing thing with *Logan's Shadow* is that, after the sheer brilliance of *Dark Mirror* – which was so good Sony ported it from PSP to PS2 – we were expecting more from this. The story is particularly lightweight for the most part and only throws a genuine shock in right at the end (we won't spoil it). The aforementioned QTEs are pointless. Also, the action hinges on taking out hordes of soldiers, which begins to get repetitive after a while. Simply taking aim and lining up the shapes is about as complex as it gets, and isn't helped by the wonky AI stupidly stepping into your sights a split-second after you've just dropped one of their comrades. Plus it's not always clear where you're supposed to head next unless equipped with the BDU goggles that flash up your next objective in yellow. It's not the epic sequel we expected nor wanted, but it's not all bad.

With clever little boss battles against heavily-armed, yet vulnerable, bad guys – who *will* die following a well-aimed head-shot – the chance to take on a Russian sub, underwater, with your bare hands, sniper missions where you play as a female British agent covering Gabe as he makes a dash for safety and a relentless stream of fodder to blast, *Logan's Shadow* is often very exciting, and *Syphon Filter* remains one of PSP's must-haves. Let's just hope that next time Gabe doesn't drown under needless new features. **Nathan Irvine**

Shock it to me

The best gun is the sniper rifle. It can shoot explosives, gas and electric darts, activated with R1 when lodged in a foe.

Fave Feature



"Using the gas darts to send your enemies to sleep"

PSM3 Verdict

syphon filter
LOGAN'S SHADOW

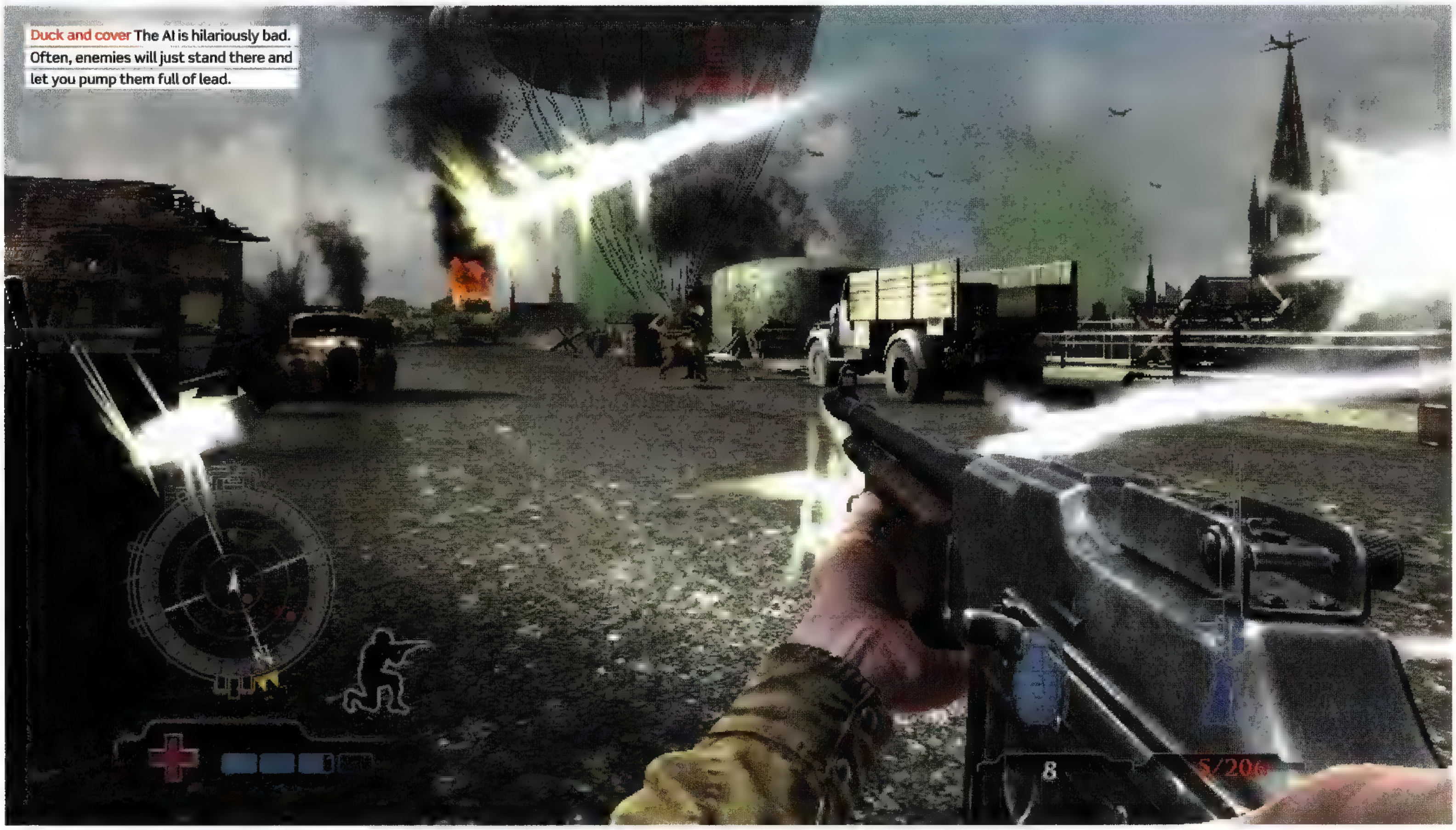
***Syphon Filter: Logan's Shadow* contains...**
Terrorism | A collection of special goggles
Lots and lots of swimming

Overall It's not the giant leap we expected after *Dark Mirror*, but it's still beautiful and definitely worth checking out.

77

Pub EA | **Dev** EA LA
Price £40 | **Release** Out now
Multi-player 1-12

ON THE DISC
[illegible]



Duck and cover The AI is hilariously bad. Often, enemies will just stand there and let you pump them full of lead.

Medal of Honor: Airborne

EA's ailing franchise lands short of the mark

Medal Of Honor: *Airborne* isn't short of good ideas. Firstly, the parachute drops at the start of each mission are incredibly exciting, with impressive draw distances. In a novel twist, you get to choose where you start the level, rather than just magically appearing in the midst of the battlefield like in most first-person shooters. Green smoke indicates safe areas, but landing on rooftops or behind entrenched enemies can have tactical benefits, as well as earning you bonus 'skill drop' accolades.

Then there's the cover system, the only thing *Airborne* does better than *CoD4*. Duck behind a crate or a low wall while holding R2 and you can use the right analogue stick to pop in and out horizontally or vertically. This lets you stick your head over and get a few shots in before sinking back to your hiding place. On paper it doesn't sound particularly special, but feels remarkably natural in action.

Dropping in

But you know those 'skill drops' we mentioned earlier? Being rewarded for landing in specific areas, like small windows or on rooftops? Well, that's all fine and good, until you realise that if you just *walk past* one of these spots you get the award anyway. And the combat awards system is similarly schizophrenic – we ran up to a soldier and whacked him with the butt of our gun, only to be presented with a 'Sharpshooter Award' and a weapon upgrade. Ridiculous.

But most of all, the shooting's just not good enough. You could blame the period weapons for the sloppy, inaccurate aiming, but you should never sacrifice gameplay for authenticity. Also, the missions themselves are vintage *Medal Of Honor* (blowing up AA guns, etc) and feel derivative and outmoded compared to *CoD4*'s bounty of things to do. It's good that you're free to complete objectives in any order, but when your objectives aren't that interesting in the first place it doesn't really matter.

The multi-player's good, though. If you're playing as the Allies you parachute in from above, while the Axis defend from the ground. This makes for tense, tactical action and, yes, you can shoot people from their parachutes before they land. But it doesn't make *Airborne* worth buying because it's clumsy, short-lived and lags so far behind *CoD4* it's not even funny – even if the delayed PS3 version is near identical to the Xbox 360 original. **Andy Kelly**

Boom box The grenade smoke looks ten generations behind that of *Call Of Duty 4*, as does everything else.

Weapon of choice

You choose weapons before each mission. Weirdly, the German machine gun is way better than the US one.

PSM3 Verdict

***Medal Of Honor: Airborne* contains...**
Screaming soldiers | Sombre trumpet music | Parachutes | Explosions

Overall We waited too long for this, and now it's finally here it's a big disappointment. Shabby.

69

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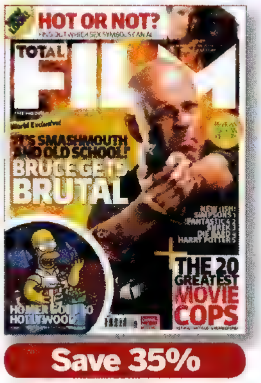

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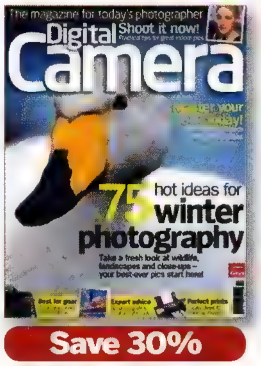
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Pub EA | **Dev** Valve
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ON THE DISC
Watch *The Orange Box* on the disc now
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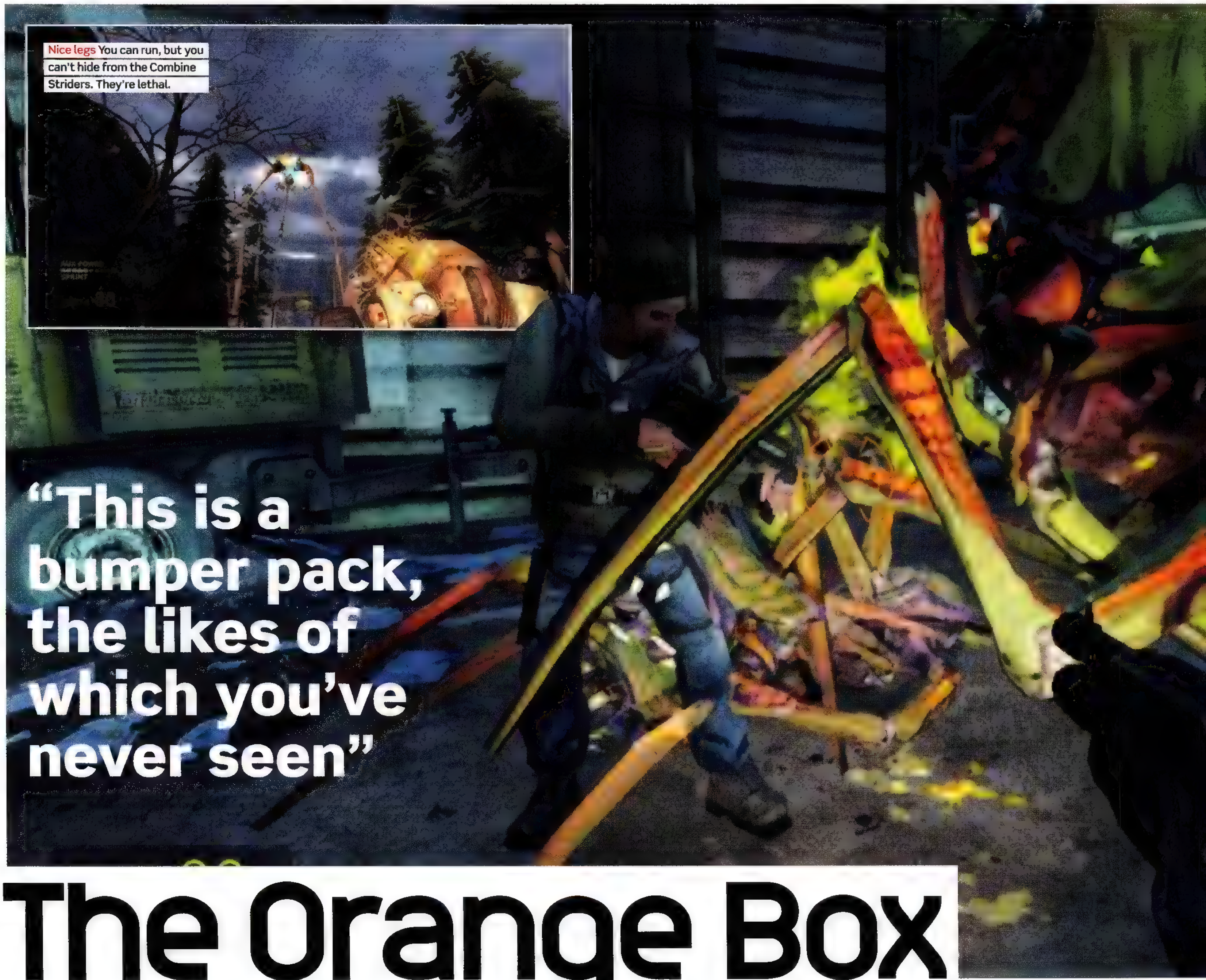


Nice legs You can run, but you can't hide from the Combine Striders. They're lethal.

> "This is a bumper pack, the likes of which you've never seen"

The Orange Box

Delayed, and blighted by slowdown, but *Half-Life*'s appeal doesn't decay

KNOW IT NOW

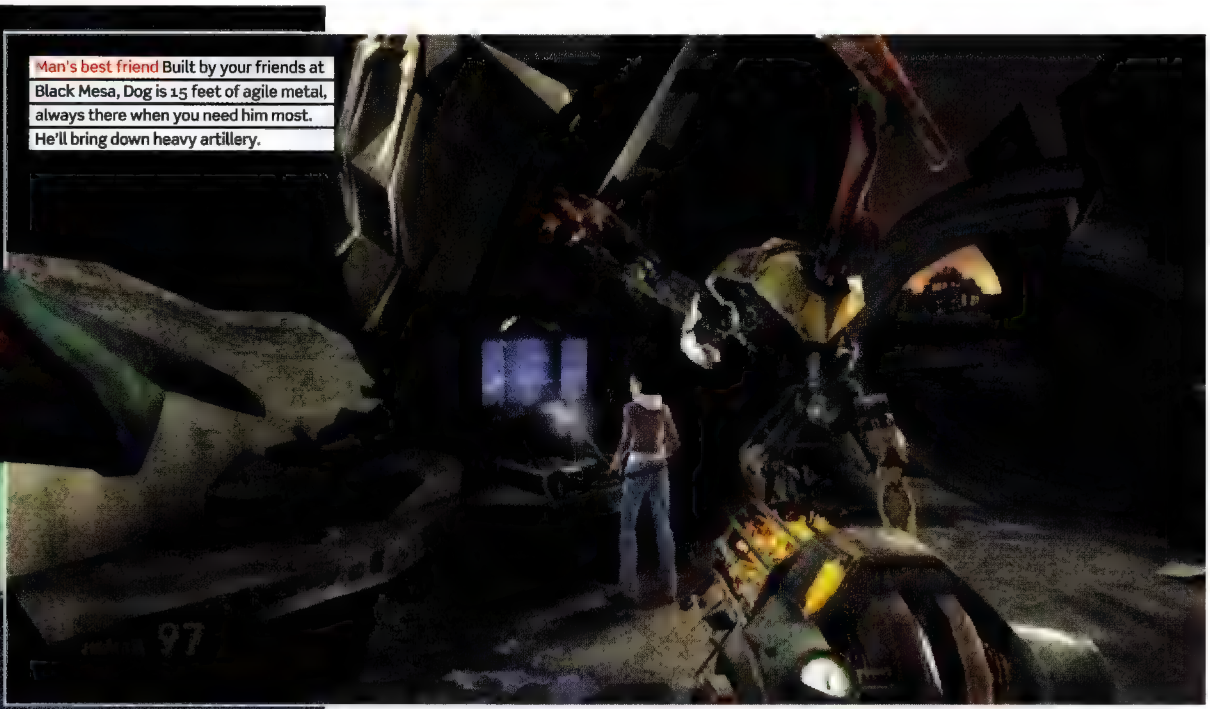
One of the all-time great FPS's?	✓
One of the all-time maddest puzzlers?	✓
Incredible value for money?	✓
Runs as smoothly as you'd expect?	✗

Before you ask – yes, this the first review of the PS3 version. Ignore rival mags who've based their impressions on Xbox code. And yes, it slows down, but no, it isn't enough to ruin the game(s) – far from it – although it can affect your aiming and has, albeit slightly, affected our final score. OK?

The Orange Box, for the unitiated, is a compilation of five pretty damn fine FPS's – the stellar *Half-Life 2*, plus extra adventures *Episode One* and *Episode Two*, which continue the story. Then there's online shooter *Team Fortress 2* and mind-mangling first-person puzzler, *Portal*. Phew.

Let's recap the plot, just briefly. Lead character Gordon Freeman's journey, crammed into just one part of *The Orange Box*, is epic in every sense. You don't have to have played *Half-Life* to enjoy it so we'll forego too much history. Just know that in that first game, released in 1998, something went bang in the Black Mesa Research Facility, opening a portal between an alien world and ours. One of few survivors, Freeman was the one tasked with escaping the wreckage and putting everything right. Just as well he's a mix of brainiac and maniac, equally skilled with hands, brain, weapons and crowbar.

Half-Life 2 **[1]** opens with Freeman transported by the mysterious G-Man (he wears a tie, carries a briefcase and speaks in riddles – that's all we know) to an Earth of the not-too-distant future. Humanity has been enslaved by an alien race called the Combine, shepherded into giant fortified cities for brainwashing, torture and who-knows-what else. City 17 is the police state capital of this new world, its Combine architecture literally eating our own, and spreading out rapidly from the all-controlling Citadel. And somehow, Black Mesa's former administrator, Dr Wallace Breen, has come to rule the planet.



Man's best friend Built by your friends at Black Mesa, Dog is 15 feet of agile metal, always there when you need him most. He'll bring down heavy artillery.

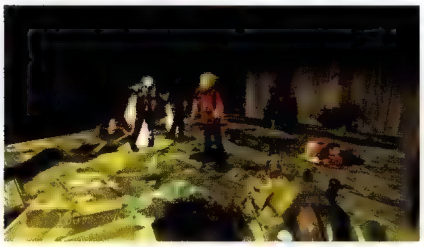
You bug me They look like neither ant nor lion, but Antlions certainly act the part. Unless you plug their nests, they'll charge and hop after you.

PSM3
BUY IT

To tell you the rest would take another dozen pages, so know this: you're in for one helluva ride. PC owners had to wait years for all the twists and turns, enduring cliff-hanger endings and delays between episodes. Here, you get *Half-Life 2*, which flows into *Episodes One* and *Two* – or you can skip directly to each episode.

Freeman on a mission

As Freeman flees the Combine-controlled City 17, survives the wilderness and becomes a hero of the human resistance, *Half-Life 2* visits pretty much every corner of the FPS world. It has an environment as bleak as *Killzone*'s Vekta, but altogether more atmospheric and complete. Its characters are superbly realised, more like those of movies than games. And once you get your hands on the now-famous Gravity Gun, its physics-puzzles add a whole new dimension to the game.



Zombie Head-crabs have turned the residents of Ravenholm, a City 17 suburb, into an undead army.

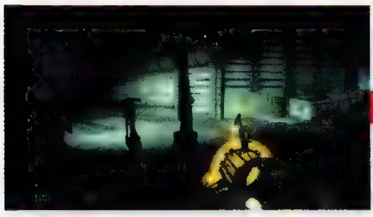
And that's about half of *The Orange Box*. And so we come to ***Team Fortress 2* [2]**, a class-based deathmatch game with its tongue planted firmly in its cheek. If Pixar made Platoon, this is probably what it'd look like. Beautifully cel-shaded and comically animated, it's a chaotic riot that's easy to pick up.

It's not a weapons-based tactics game like *Resistance*, or a multi-modal warzone like *Warhawk* – there are no vehicles to

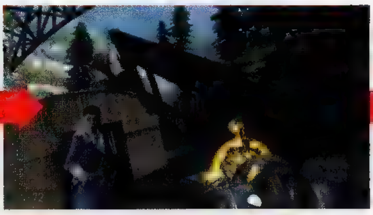
[1] Half-Life 2

Weight right there

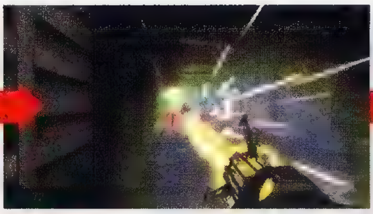
With the Gravity Gun, the possibilities are endless



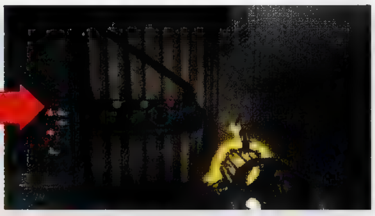
Puzzling Hook cables up to sockets, make platforms out of crates, turn planks into walkways. Far from the usual levers and pressure pads.



Escape Wrench doors from hinges and blow apart those boarded-up passageways. Gas canisters and Combine blockades make a good combo.



Smackdown From exploding barrels to toilets and radiators, anything is ammo with this baby. Just pull it from the wall and let it rip.

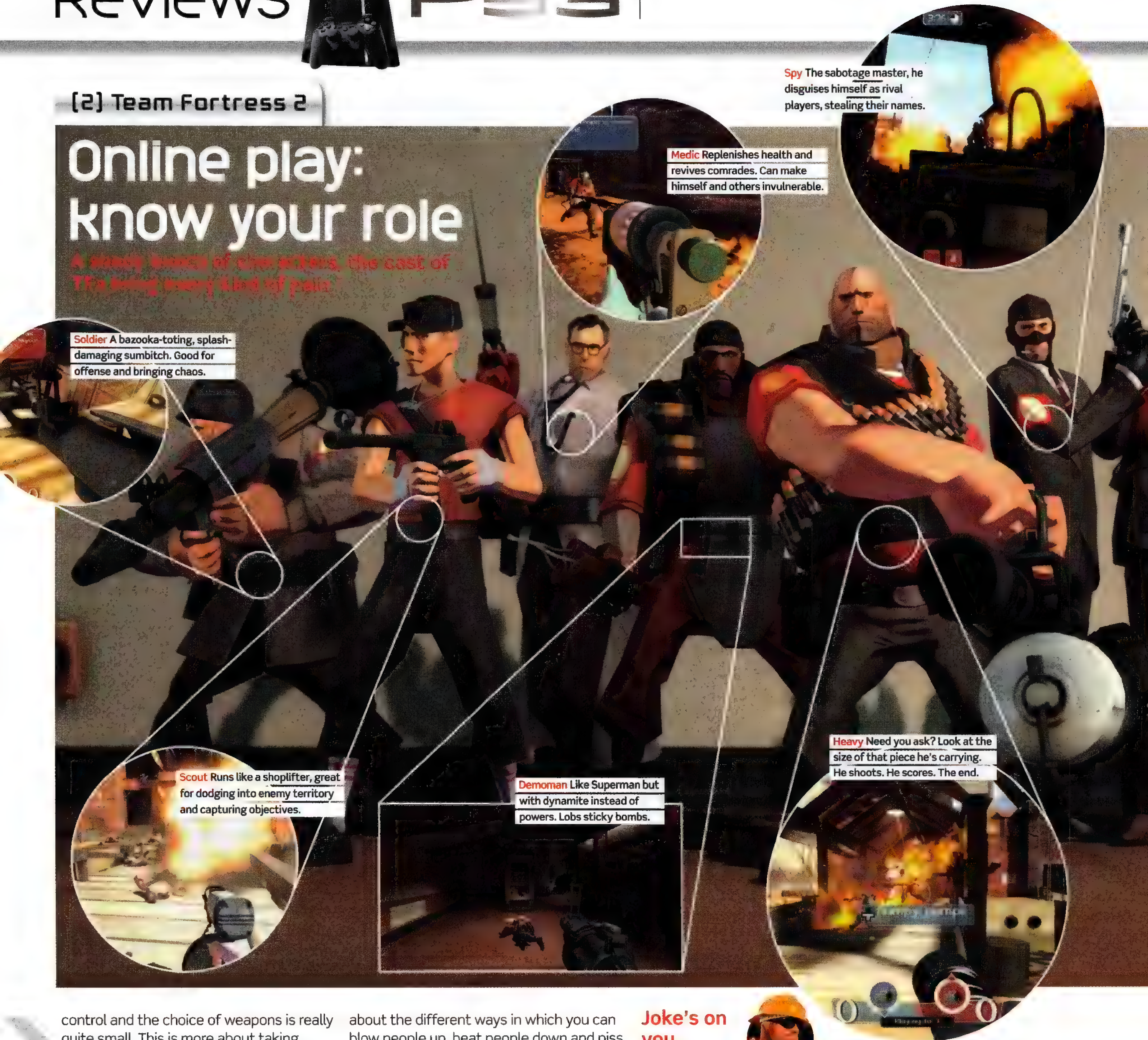


Weapon drop Combine turrets reprogrammed by the resistance make great defences. Pick 'em up and plonk them next to enemy access points.

[2] Team Fortress 2

Online play: know your role

A seedy bunch of characters, the cast of TF2 bring every kind of pain



Spy The sabotage master, he disguises himself as rival players, stealing their names.

Medic Replenishes health and revives comrades. Can make himself and others invulnerable.

Soldier A bazooka-toting, splash-damaging sumbitch. Good for offense and bringing chaos.

Scout Runs like a shoplifter, great for dodging into enemy territory and capturing objectives.

Demoman Like Superman but with dynamite instead of powers. Lobs sticky bombs.

Heavy Need you ask? Look at the size of that piece he's carrying. He shoots. He scores. The end.

control and the choice of weapons is really quite small. This is more about taking characters with specific skills (and comedy accents), throwing them into the pot and stirring things up. We've explained the classes just above, and they say a lot about the different ways in which you can blow people up, beat people down and piss people off.

Fort in the act *Team Fortress 2* is massively competitive online. We'll do an online review in the future.

The match types, meanwhile, are easy to get the hang of. You've got Deathmatch and Team Deathmatch, Capture The Flag (or, in this case, the briefcase) and territorial conquest, where one team has to defend its command points while the other attacks.

Like any great multi-player shooter, there's something for every playing style. You can snipe, set up defensive turrets and supply points, sneak and sabotage, or just go in guns (and rockets) blazing. So, in addition to Freeman's epic story, *Orange Box* gives you this full-size PC multi-player game as well. All for the price of, say, *50 Cent: Bulletproof* or Dido's back catalogue. You see the point.

Joke's on you
Every character in *Team Fortress 2* has his own taunt. Do it in the thick of battle for maximum effect

Any *Portal* in a storm

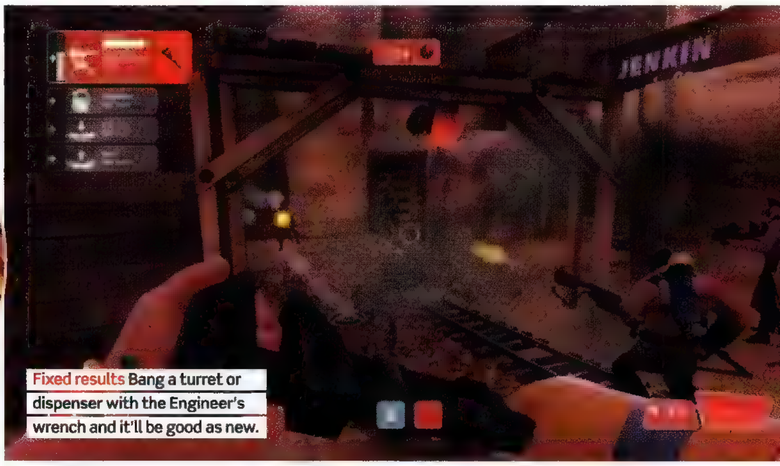
And that's before we get to what, for some, will be the crowning touch. ***Portal*** [3] is a mind-bending little gem, barely over two hours long but worth every minute. You're an android, inducted into the training programme of the mysterious Aperture Science Enrichment Centre, led through 19 puzzles by the promise of a pat on the back

Sentry Gun built by Giant Panda?

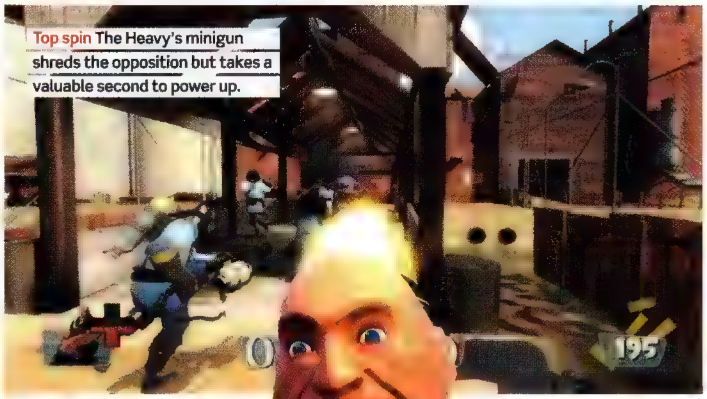
Sniper For the headshot specialist, or people who just can't stand a straight-up fight.

Pyro Don't like aiming? Just wade this guy into a room full of enemies and pull the trigger.

Engineer This guy is cool. Along with supply points, he builds turrets firing bullets and missiles.



Fixed results Bang a turret or dispenser with the Engineer's wrench and it'll be good as new.



Top spin The Heavy's minigun shreds the opposition but takes a valuable second to power up.

> **"*Team Fortress 2* is how Platoon would look if it was made by Pixar"**

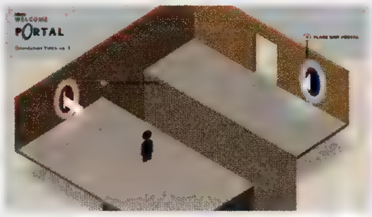
[3] Portal

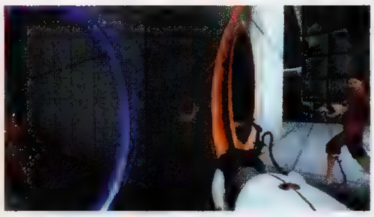
Break on through to the other side

Your guide to going in one and coming out the other

BASICS

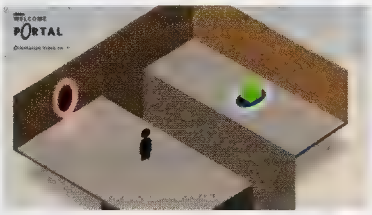
Portalling Portals can be fired at walls, ceilings and floors, so long as the surface is simple concrete (it usually is). Once both are in place, they act as a tunnel which you can walk through. Beware, though – enemy turrets can also aim and fire through them if you're standing in the wrong place. So take good care.





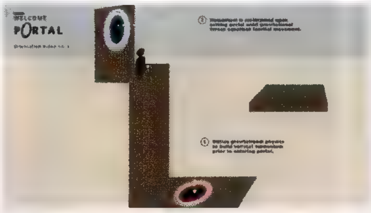
GRAVITY

Dropping Fire a portal beneath an object like a box or turret and, guess what, it falls. Where it reappears depends on where the other portal's placed. Using this method, you can drop creates on to pressure pads, bring them from a locked room into your own, or just drop them into furnaces for them to be destroyed.



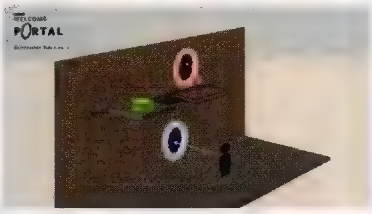
MOMENTUM

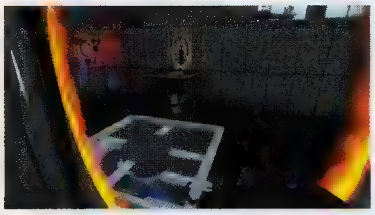
Flying Some puzzles require you to jump impossible distances, either to cross barriers or reach high ledges. Normally, you'd just portal through the wall to where you want to go, but sometimes the walls won't let you. The solution: put one portal on the floor and then drop down into the other one, firing you through the air.



TIMING

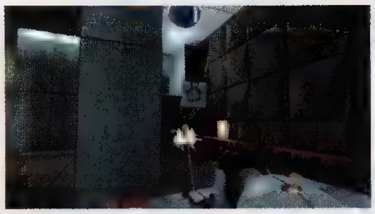
Platforms Sometimes it's not as a simple as going in one and coming out the other. What if there's a moving platform on the other side with acid beneath? Timing is vital, especially when you have to portal power orbs from one place to another, through doors which require manual activation, then close after a few seconds.





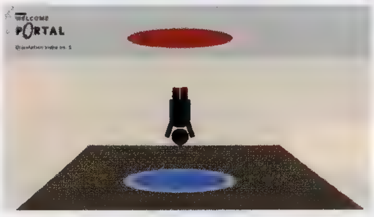
OFFENSE

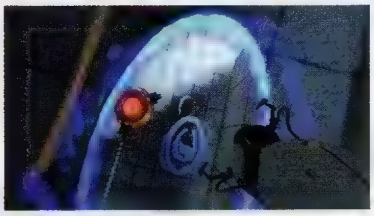
Turrets Portals aren't just a mode of transport – they're a deadly weapon as well. Turrets will shred you upon sight, but not if you portal in behind them and knock them over. Even better, you can drop turrets on to each other, redirect power orbs so they bowl into them, or simply drop them over great distances to their doom.

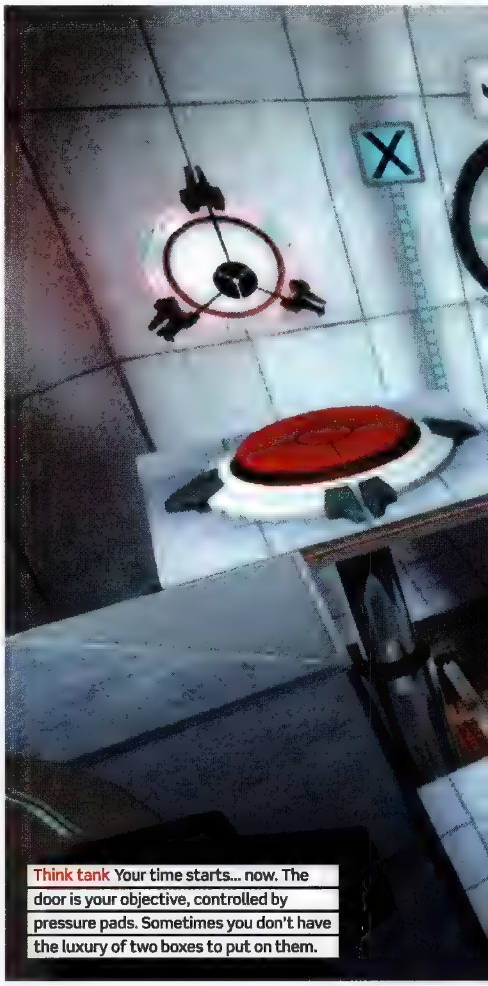


INFINITY

Falling You can fall pretty much any distance in *Portal* without damage, and sometimes without landing at all. Fire portals into the floor and ceiling above one other, and you'll keep on going round and round (or down and down). This builds up momentum, so if you can move the ceiling portal to a wall, you'll fire out like a bullet.







Think tank Your time starts... now. The door is your objective, controlled by pressure pads. Sometimes you don't have the luxury of two boxes to put on them.

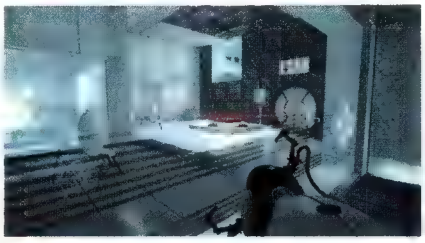
and some cake at the end. Honestly, we're not making this up.

You have a gun, but rather than bullets it fires doors – portals – one mapped to L2, the other to R2. When both are in place on walls, floors or ceilings, they act as a tunnel; go in one and you come out the other. So forget ladders, double-jumps and elevators – you won't need 'em. Want to get from down there to all the way up there? Just fire one portal on to a surface at your destination, another on one nearby and walk on through. Want to get a box past a locked door? Provided you have a clear shot to the room beyond, then you have to fire one portal on to its ceiling and another beneath the box – the box falls through and drops in.

Confused? Just wait until the puzzles get going. Some have you portalling barrels on to gun turrets, turrets on to barrels, or yourself *behind* turrets so you can simply push them over. Others ask you to get a bouncing orb into a power socket, which means lining up the portals so that, rather than bounce off the wall, the orb flies straight through from one to the other.

Breakneck speed

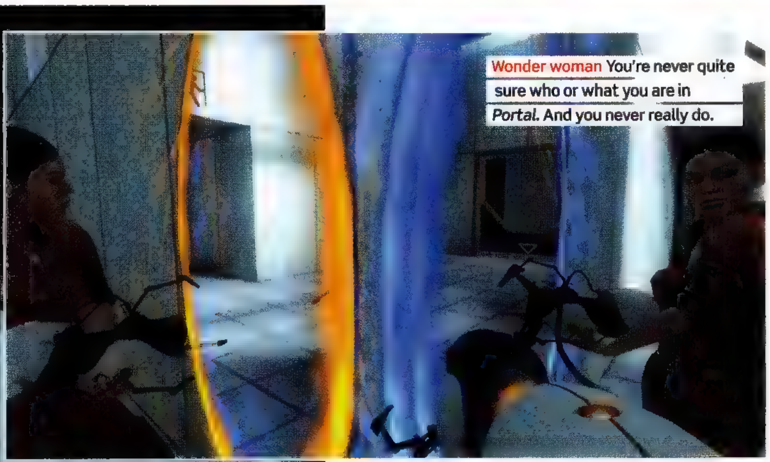
Add to that the issue of momentum. Say you jump into a portal at a running pace – you'll exit the other at the same speed. So if you put one portal on a wall facing sideways, the other on a floor a hundred feet below you, when you jump down you'll be flung out at breakneck speed. Even more confused? Don't worry. *Portal* starts things off gently and makes sure you've grasped one concept before moving to the next. In no time, you'll be flying up, down,



Death proof The glass protects you from any number of bullets, but you won't last long if you're exposed.

The Orange Box

“Sometimes the slowdown is so choppy you can’t even aim properly”



Wonder woman You’re never quite sure who or what you are in *Portal*. And you never really do.

Hot bath Falling in acid isn’t wise. That said, checkpoints are saved with almost every step you take.

left, right, in and out so fast you’ll be unleashing copious waves of technicolour vomit. Well, maybe.

There are serious physics at work here, and come the epic last level you’ll need to have mastered them all. But *Portal*, believe it or not, isn’t a serious game. It’s a comedy. As a lab rat who ends up fleeing the maze, you’re constantly watched, lectured and mollycoddled by a slightly mental AI computer. And the more you suss things out, the more mental she becomes and the funnier it gets. Is there really cake at the end? You owe it to yourself to find out.

There is a catch, though. And why, dammit, in a game based on three-year old technology is there one of those? In every game except *Portal*, *The Orange Box* suffers occasional slowdown. Sometimes it’s just enough to have you say, “Hang on, the Xbox 360 version doesn’t do this.” At worst, it makes things so choppy that you can’t aim properly. Add that to the loose sticks of the Sixaxis and you have a problem. While Valve, the game’s original developer, handled the 360 version, this one was ported in the UK, by Electronic Arts themselves. If that doesn’t make you, as a PS3 owner, feel like a third-class citizen, the result certainly will.

None of this changes the fact that *The Orange Box* is a bumper pack the likes of which you’ve never seen – a chance, finally, to play one of the greatest game series ever made, without an awkward high-spec PC or a massive wait between episodes. That *Half-Life 2* is a must-play is undeniable. That it plays better elsewhere, however, is unforgivable. **Duncan Harris**

Fave Feature

“City 17 – the greatest place in gaming”

PSM3 Verdict

The Orange Box
PLAYSTATION 3
Half-Life 2: Episode Two
Team Fortress 2
Portal
15

***The Orange Box* contains...**

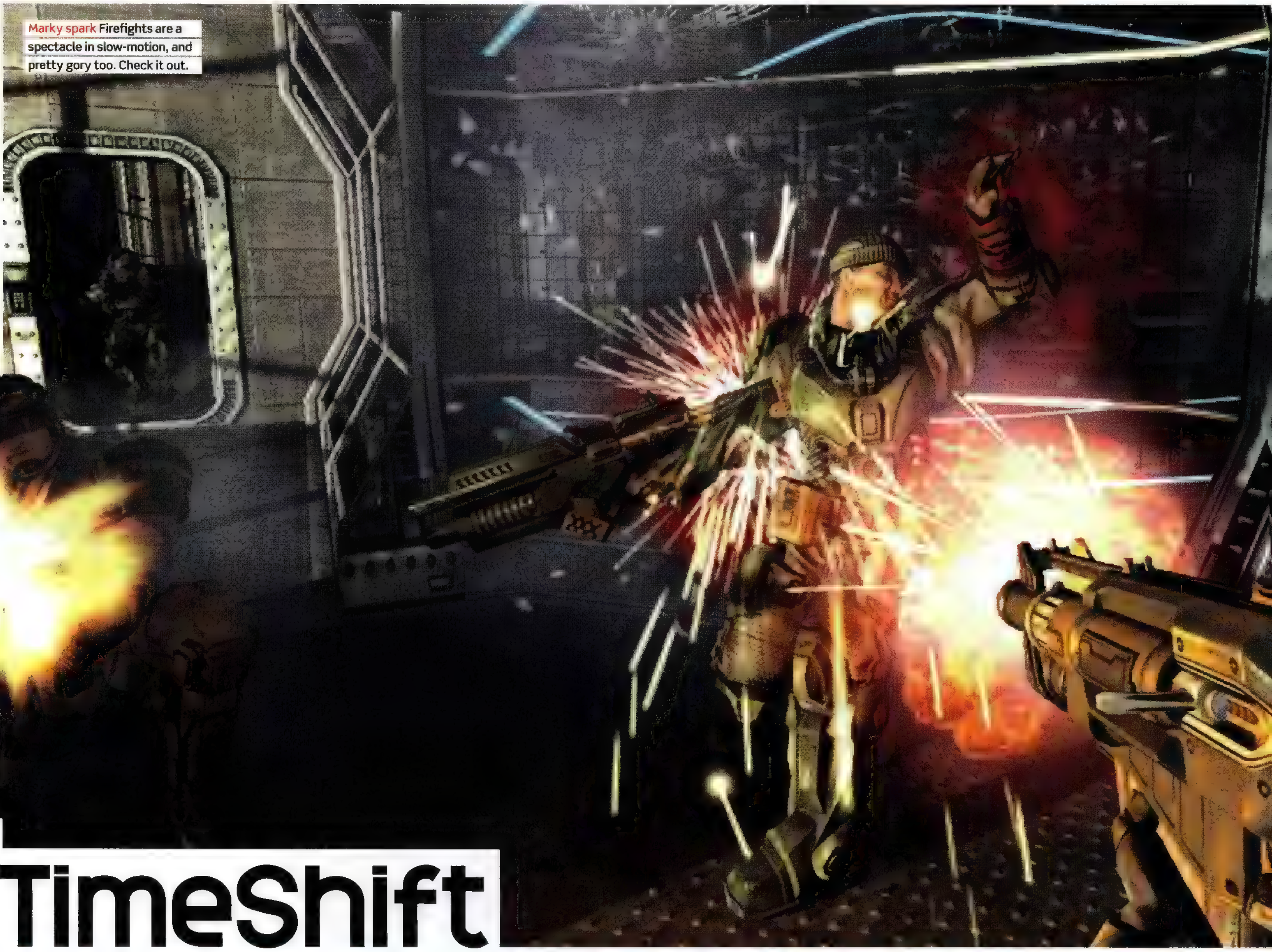
Five Half-Life games | A puzzling epic
Hours of gameplay | Slowdown

Overall Five ace games in one box. The slowdown shouldn’t stop you having an Orange Christmas..

90

Pub Sierra | **Dev** Saber Interactive
Price £40 | **Release** Out now
Multi-player 1-16

ON THE DISC
See *TimeShift* in action
on the disc now
[illegible]



Marky spark Firefights are a spectacle in slow-motion, and pretty gory too. Check it out.

TimeShift

Time-bending FPS arrives too late to compete with *Call Of Duty 4*. Ironic

KNOW IT NOW

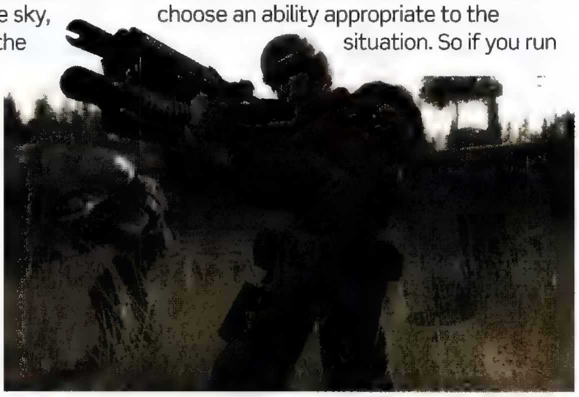
- Dark dystopian futurescapes? ✓
- Perpetual, drizzling atmospheric rain? ✓
- An overwhelming sense of bleakness? ✓
- Heaving with originality? ✗

The press material for *TimeShift* bangs on and on about how unique it is, but let's be honest – it's not. It's a first-person shooter set in a dark alternate future that lets you control time. On just how many occasions have we traipsed through dark alternate futures? And how many games let you control time? OK, about *seven* – including mediocre racer *S.C.A.R.* – but you get the point. Don't get us wrong – *TimeShift* is good, but saying it's in any way original is an enormous fib.

But just because the setting and time-shifting mechanic are unoriginal, it doesn't mean they aren't well-implemented. They are, in fact, quite well done. The world is an atmosphere-drenched blend of Terry Gilliam steampunk and 1984-style dystopia. The rain effects are absolutely stunning and watching it dribbling down window panes and forming puddles on the pavement is a high-definition delight. The city that plays host to the first handful of levels is in the midst of a raging battle – fighter planes skim across the sky, blimps shine spotlights onto the streets below and majestic art-deco skyscrapers burn on the horizon. It's nothing we haven't seen a million times before, but it's impressively epic nonetheless.

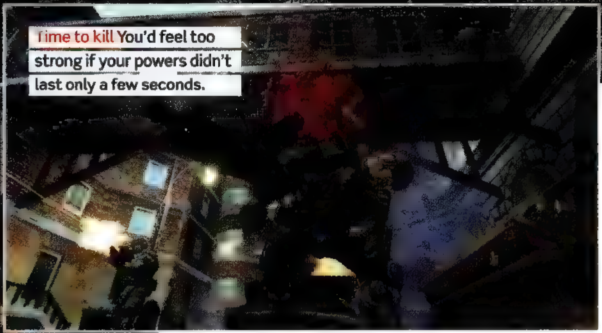
Right on time

As for the time control, *TimeShift*'s token gimmick, it's loads of fun. Sometimes, at least. Squeeze L1 and you have a choice of powers – go back in time, slow time down, go forward in time, speed up time and pause time. You can choose these yourself, but if you just tap L1 the AI will choose an ability appropriate to the situation. So if you run



Run and gun Look at this guy – he's straight out of an early '90s PC game. The character designs in *TimeShift* are often embarrassingly generic.

Wet suit The water effects are ace, even in the rare moments when it's not raining.



Time to kill You'd feel too strong if your powers didn't last only a few seconds.

into a room and it starts to collapse on top of you, pressing L1 will make time freeze and you can run to safety. The computer almost always picks the right one for each situation, which saves you from any unfair deaths along the way.

The time effects look lovely too, especially in the rain. The screen goes all wobbly and you can see individual rain drops suspended in mid-air. See, the thing about your powers is that while time is frozen or otherwise manipulated, you move around unaffected. This means that you can walk across water, run around at normal speed whenever time is slowed down and stay where you are while the world around you rewinds.

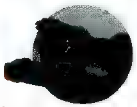
So there's a lot of fun in experimenting with your powers. Our favourite trick is to freeze time, run up to an enemy and nick their gun. When you return to normal time the baffled guard will stare at his hands, confused, and then run for cover, letting you finish him off with his own weapon. We also like slowing time down, running behind a pack of enemies and filling their backs with lead, speeding it up again and watching them die in unison after a split-second delay. Morbid? Us? Probably.

Old timer

But really, this is a fairly basic action-FPS. The shooting is distinctly old-school, with fat, overpowered weapons and chunky character models that explode into fountains of giblets when they die. It's slick, accurate and a damn sight better than a lot of first-person shooters, but lacks the pin-sharp, robust feel of *Call Of Duty 4*. Some environmental puzzles mix things up a bit – shifting time to cross electrocuted water for example – but there's not enough of them, and because of the way the AI selects a powers appropriate to the situation, finding the solution is never really that difficult.

There are some incredible set-pieces in *TimeShift* – a humongous spider robot smashing a city apart in real-time for instance – and the time-control stuff is occasionally very clever, but there are too many prolonged sections of dull-as-ditchwater shooty bits and lame puzzling. We don't hate this – far from it – but with *Call Of Duty 4* and *The Orange Box* knocking about for the same price... well, you'd be crazy to buy it first. Finished with both of those? Well, consider *TimeShift*. But be cautious, eh? It really isn't anything particularly special. **Andy Kelly**

Mode music



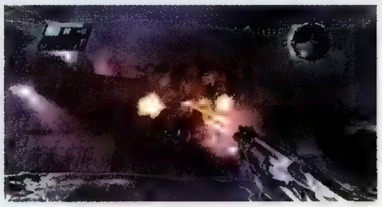
All of *TimeShift*'s weapons have two fire modes. The assault rifle's grenades are a riot when fired in slow-motion. Just watch the ragdoll corpses fly...

Powers

Time for heroes

How to manipulate time to your advantage...

Mr freeze Pause time and you can pinch his gun, or just go behind his back and shoot him. Either/or.



Speed freak To get past this skyscraper-size mech you have to speed up time and run for it.

Gunning for glory Gun turret? No problem – slow down time, dodge the bullets and kill him.

Abort, retry, flail When time is sped up, corpses flail around wildly, splattering blood everywhere. Neat.

PSM3 Verdict

***TimeShift* contains...**

Flying limbs | Popping heads | Giant robot spiders | Shouting men | Time trickery

Overall There's enough action here to distract, but compared to its peers *TimeShift* feels outdated.

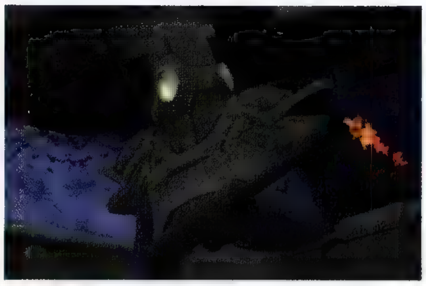
72

Pub Sega | **Dev** Shiny Entertainment
Price £30 | **Release** Out now
Multiplayer None

ON THE DISC
We'll review Compass on next month's disc [illegible]

Polar power You can smash enemies to bits with Iorek's claws, but it's a bit cumbersome.

Daemon days Lyra's daemon, Pan, can change shapes and help out. He's only got four forms, though.


Artistic license We're fairly sure diving suit-wearing flamethrower troops weren't in the novel. For shame.

The Golden Compass

Another license that deserves to be left out in the cold

The Golden Compass gives new meaning to the all-too-common phrase 'disappointing movie tie-in'. Perhaps if the film wasn't quite as epic, or the Philip Pullman book it's based on quite so engaging, we wouldn't have been so crushed to find the game is such guff.

Confusingly, the game starts at the end of the story, with heroine Lyra racing round the Arctic searching for her pal Roger on the back of Iorek the polar bear. Unless you know the story it all seems a bit mad, and the game never really explains why you're there and who everyone is. Still, it's a forgivable oversight because – after all – this is the game of the film.

The opening level is hugely disappointing, and that sets the tone nicely for the rest of the game. Iorek's combat sections, where he clumsily swipes his paws at packs of wolves and leaps over crevasses in the ice reminds us of the dodgy ape sections from King Kong. Not a good thing.

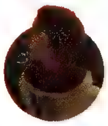
Bear necessities Mauling hunters and wild animals is what the Iorek sections are all about. Shame they're guff.

Grin and bear it

Once you've tramped around the ice-caps for a while you're rudely dumped back to the start of the story and, after a rambling cut-scene voiced by sexy witch Serafina Pekkala (played by Casino Royale's Eva Green in the film), you're introduced to Lyra's adventuring/platforming abilities.

The Lyra sections are, on the whole, rubbish. Your time is split between agonisingly slow beam-balancing, bog-standard platforming, and – thankfully – OK conversation minigames. This means chatting to other characters, (and, where necessary, lying to get your own way) and collecting items to complete tasks.

Once you've beaten the first few stages you'll be awarded with the film's titular Golden Compass. In the film, the Golden Compass is a mythical device that helps Lyra discover various truths about her journey and the people around her. In the game, it's used to advance the plot when people ask you a question. Then you play a minigame where you match the compass's hands to specific symbols, and then jab the buttons when prompted. It takes a little getting used to, but overall its inclusion and implementation makes sense.



Mini-lame
When she's talking to adults, Lyra can tell a fib by completing one of several tedious minigames.

As for the rest of the package – it's a mixed bag of mediocrity. Character likenesses are generally fine, but some of the voice acting is atrocious. Environments are very evocative of the film, but there's a ton of other stuff packed in that pisses in the eyes of the mythos. One example that springs to mind is the level where Lyra spends her time on board the Gyptian's ship cleaning, what the game refers to as 'poops', off the deck. It all feels like a waste of a license, so even if you're the nuttiest Pullmanite on the planet, you'd do better to leave this on the shelf. **Andy Hartup**

PSM3 Verdict

PlayStation 2
The Golden Compass
12

Golden Compass contains...
Armoured bears | Boring platforming
Hot witches | No actual compasses

Overall A crushing disappointment for fans of the books and film. Oh, and gamers generally, too.

45

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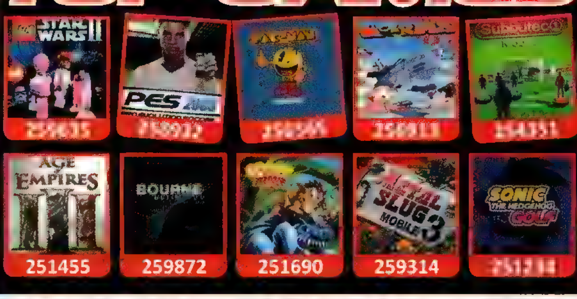

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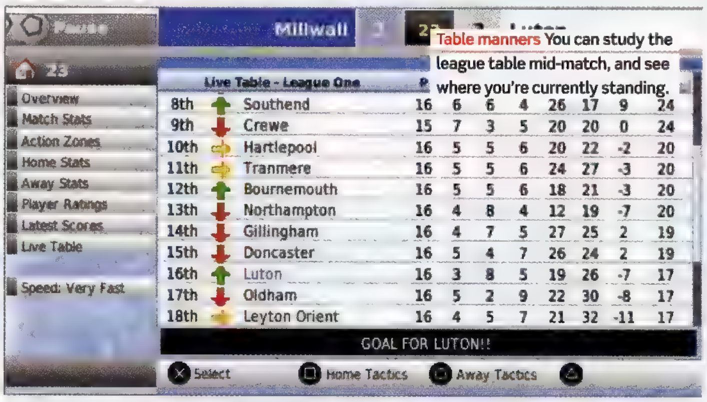


Live Table - League One

		P							
8th	Southend	16	6	6	4	26	17	9	24
9th	Crewe	15	7	3	5	20	20	0	24
10th	Hartlepool	16	5	5	6	20	22	-2	20
11th	Tranmere	16	5	5	6	24	27	-3	20
12th	Bournemouth	16	5	5	6	18	21	-3	20
13th	Northampton	16	4	8	4	12	19	-7	20
14th	Gillingham	16	4	7	5	27	25	2	19
15th	Doncaster	16	5	4	7	26	24	2	19
16th	Luton	16	3	8	5	19	26	-7	17
17th	Oldham	16	5	2	9	22	30	-8	17
18th	Leyton Orient	16	4	5	7	21	32	-11	17

GOAL FOR LUTON!!

Table manners You can study the league table mid-match, and see where you're currently standing.

Sega | PSP | Out Now

Football Manager Handheld 08

Finding strength in the reserves

Sports Interactive's portable sim might transform your life – since rather than spending 20 hours a week slumped over a PC, you can now tweak tactics in the sunshine, or develop the squad in the park. Dammit, it's almost *healthy*. Almost.

Unfortunately this dream is fulfilled through compromise – less leagues than the PC game, less players, less stats... less of a game. Consequently it's those are new to the series that will enjoy *FM Handheld* the most, partly because they won't know any better, but also because what *is* crammed in still manages to create a believable football world.

Make a reservation

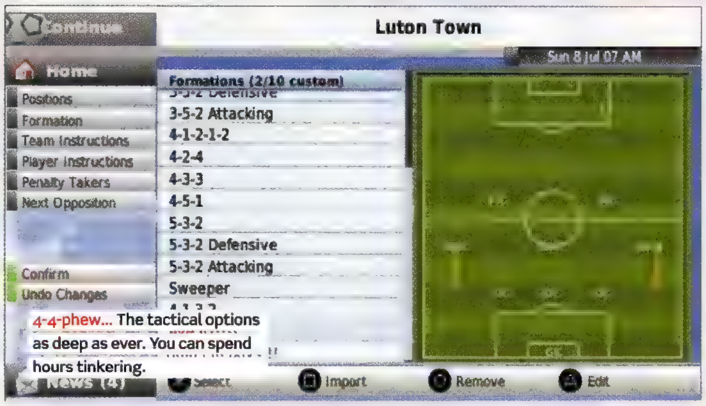
There's a total of 10 leagues and a few new cup competitions, but the most significant addition is the inclusion of reserve squads. This gives you loads more options for creating a long-term strategy at larger clubs and picking up under-used talent on loan. It's also more stat-porn for those who just like to browse for obscure players.

As for other changes they're mainly cosmetic and technical, so in terms of loading times this is the most satisfactory of the handheld *FM*s. To call it lightning quick would be pushing it, but there's less temptation to hurl your PSP across the room out of sheer boredom.

It's a significant improvement on last year's game. Sports Interactive have shown once again how to make a good management game within the constraints of PSP. Well done. **Dave Harrison**

PSM3 Verdict

Still evolving, and every bit as absorbing as ever. **80**



4-4-phew... The tactical options as deep as ever. You can spend hours tinkering.

2K Games | PS3 | Out now

NHL 2K8

Back on the ice once more...

This is the second *NHL 2K* game on PS3, but this solid, slightly humdrum, update only gently improves on last years' outing.

2K have introduced the new ProStick control system, which allows you to use the right stick to exactly position your hockey stick around the puck and control passes precisely. This is welcome but, while it does add to the gameplay, scoring still feels more like a lottery win than an achievement. And it still looks ugly, somehow even more so than last years' iteration, with the player models' eyes still looking stone dead. The commentary is also buggy, once stating – before the first game of our season had even 'pucked off' – that our performance so far was sub-par.

But it's still OK. The new Franchise – read 'Career' – mode is very comprehensive and the game is still wonderfully animated, but after having a first pop at PS3 ice hockey with *NHL 2K7*, the faults shouldn't be so easily forgiven. Disappointingly, the near-miss of last year hasn't been converted into a goal this time. **Chris Robinson**

71

Atari | PS2 | Out now

Dragon Ball Z Budokai Tenkaichi 3

More impenetrable cartoon scrapping

One thing you can't accuse *Budokai Tenkaichi 3* of is being a lazy sequel, as with over 150 playable characters and the Disc Fusion System – that allows you to unlock new game modes by inserting previous *Budokai Tenkaichi* saves – this screams value. It also screams *Dragon Ball Z*, which means it will only attract the attention of fans of the anime series – which is a shame as this is a beat-'em-up that mixes superb visuals, a solid fighting system and some heart breaking drama.

See, every bout feels like an earth-shattering event and it outdoes pretty much all other beat-'em-ups in terms of passion and sheer camp. The problem is that this extremity will alienate anyone expecting *Virtua Fighter*-style sobriety and sophistication, rendering *Budokai Tenkaichi* an experience more for existing *Dragon Ball Z* fans, rather than one to tempt newcomers to the series. **Dave Harrison**

77

Sierra | PSP | Out now

Aliens Vs Predator: Requiem

Two great movie beasts, one dire game

Aliens Vs Predator: Requiem is the game that breaks the film tie-in stereotype: it's *amazing*. No. Not really. It's bum. Never mind, eh? You play as a Predator and finish levels by removing evidence of your arrival on Earth – i.e. you destroy everything – and reaching the end of the stage. Oh, and you'll face off against the aliens, who will try to stop you at any cost.

It all sounds like it should be decent fun, but it isn't particularly. There's little incentive to fight the aliens, as both projectile and close combat is repetitive and just running for the exit and doing as little as required to beat the levels is just as effective as playing properly. You get Honor Points for fighting, but, well, so what? Combine that with slowdown when more than three enemies are on-screen, a frustrating camera– manually controlled with the shoulder buttons – and an awkward lock-on targeting system *using the same buttons* and you'll find a largely joyless game. *Requiem*? This game needs one played for it. **Chris Robinson**

44

Sony | PS2 | Out now

Buzz! Junior: Monster Rumble

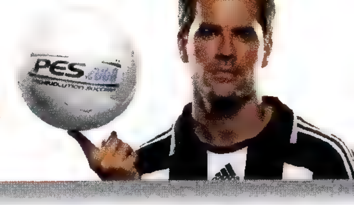
One to occupy the little terrors

Continuing in the same vein as *RoboJam* and *Jungle Party*, *Monster Rumble* is a collection of party games that utilise the *Buzz* controllers for robust button-bashing rather than testing your reflexes in a quiz show format. As the title suggests the theme here is 'monsters', specifically cartoony ones – so as not to give the kids nightmares – and the presentation is suitably energetic and enthusiastic. The minigames, however, are of an inconsistent quality. Some are genuinely funny – such as pumpkin-bashing and racing on barrels – but others often require people to take turns, something that slows down the action and can causes some to lose interest. This means that, rather than being a frantic experience throughout, the fun tends to ebb and flow. That's not a disaster, but it's far from the perfect party experience. So just make sure the folk you get to play this with you are both young and undemanding. **Dave Harrison**

62

PES 2008

"The PS2 version is looking a bit sad and neglected..."



Sony | PS2 | Out now

EyeToy Play: Astro Zoo

Out of this world

The novelty should have worn off EyeToy games. The device has been around a few years now and we should be over the thrill of seeing ourselves on telly, and the pleasure of flailing our arms around. We're not, though, as it takes a cold heart to play games like *Astro Zoo* and not start giggling.

Just the sight of your face squished into a tiny space helmet was enough to set us off, but there are loads of moments in this collection of space-themed minigames – such as intergalactic sheep-shearing and space-squirrel patting – that strip you of your dignity and force you to enjoy yourself. Of course, just like most party games there's no real substance to the gameplay, and many of the challenges are just repainted versions from previous EyeToy games, but for hour-long blasts this has the power to entertain anyone – from giddy eight-year-olds to wizened cynics. Just make sure you give yourself plenty of room and the right sort of playpals. **Dave Harrison**

68

THQ | PSP | Out Now

WWE Smackdown Vs Raw 2008

Failing to punch its weight

You can almost forgive some of the faults in this PSP version of *Smackdown*. For example, a messy 2D crowd is just something you'll have to live with in a handheld game. But there's no excuse for the clumsy control system that saps the joy from the experience, turning a game that should be slick into something decidedly stodgy.

For some reason you have to continually switch between D-pad and stick. You use the pad to move your wrestler, then flick the stick to activate grapple moves. This is too fiddly and nullifies any improvements made by the introduction of the eight different fighting styles for different Superstar types. Also unforgivable is the number of featured superstars, which has gone down to 50 or so – less than last year's game.

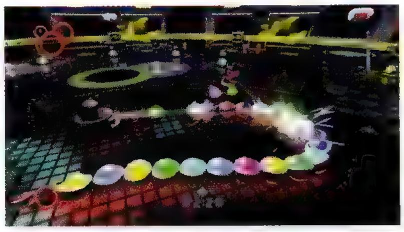
Of course THQ have packed in enough sweaty glitz and glamour to distract most WWE fans, but this a package with too many shortcomings to recommend. **Dave Harrison**

62

Sony | PS3 | Out now

Snakeball

This snake isn't so solid



Remember *Snake*, the game everyone used to play on their phones? *Snakeball* is *Snake* with a facelift. It's beautiful, with arenas that look like a nightclub dancefloor. But besides being aesthetically pleasing, *Snakeball* doesn't really offer much.

The focus of this Network game is Snakeball mode, which pits you against other competitors in order to rack up the most points, accumulated by collecting balls and placing them in goals. Like Snake these balls make your tail larger. The AI is pitifully easy, even on the highest difficulty, and *Snakeball* isn't particularly fun online either. Challenge mode gets you completing set tasks within a time limit, while Ball Frenzy is basically classic Snake and challenges you to collect 1000 balls with only one life across various arenas. Both will last you an hour at most.

Add on the overly-sensitive controls and tacked on weapons that demand you use awkward Sixaxis controls, and that's your lot. Time has moved on and, even with a few new twists, *Snake* hasn't aged well. **Chris Robinson**

54

Sony | PS3 | Out now

Piyotama

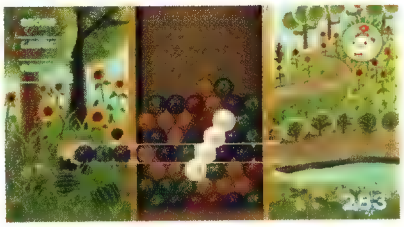
Egg-citing – that's no yoke

As a boxed game found on shop shelves we doubt *Piyotama* would have much success, but this quirky and intelligent puzzler is perfect material for the Network. It's another 'organise a bunch of coloured balls' puzzler, but one that holds your interest due to the exquisite design and the sheer scale of thing

The idea is to help a chicken hatch her eggs by constructing lines of the same colour, which sounds simple but in order to rack up a big score, combos of 10 or more have to be constructed, which means you can only focus on small section of the puzzle space if you have the bigger picture in mind. It's a process that takes a lot of getting used to, but one that's fun to learn. Innovative use of the Sixaxis adds to the experience – eggs can be prematurely hatched by shaking the controller up and down, while lines can be reorganised by wobbling the it from side to side.

It's obviously not the most groundbreaking game, but *Piyotama* has been laced with enough ingenuity to be worth downloading. Decent fun, for a while at least. **Dave Harrison**

70



Passing over There's hardly any evolution of gameplay this time – just the odd new mode.

Konami | PS2 | Out now

Pro Evolution Soccer 2008

Still refusing to hang up its boots

Really, it's easy to feel sorry for the PS2 version of *Pro Evolution Soccer*. Its release used to be one of the most eagerly-awaited events of the year, now – with all eyes on the PS3 version – it looks a bit sad and neglected. This has to be expected, but it's sad that, in terms of gameplay, *PES 2008* is almost identical to last year's game. None of the 'improvements' of the PS3 version – such as the diving or set-piece organisation – have been implemented, and there are no noticeable new animations or graphical improvements.

All over the world

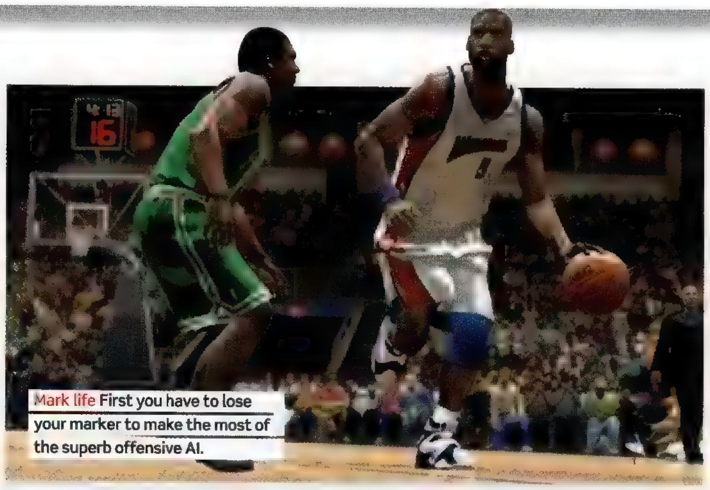
If you're looking for difference it's in the match modes, as now there's a Community option that allows you to create a place online for your mates and regular opponents to hook up. Then there's the odd World Tour mode, which has you globetrotting with your chosen team, playing in matches and completing certain objectives – such as scoring a specified amount of goals. Both interesting additions, but neither suggest that PS2 *PES* is doing anything but trying to die with dignity. We can't even recommend people buy this for all the new team line-ups, because they will be out of date by the time of the January transfer window.

But even though it lacks licenses and giant leaps forward, the fact that at its core *Pro Evo 2008* is still the most complete and sophisticated football game we've ever seen counts for something – it'll still have you punching the air in delight at last minute winners and pounding the floor at unfortunate defeat. So cherish *Pro Evolution Soccer* on PS2 – you'll miss it when it's gone. **Dave Harrison**

PSM3 Verdict

Still class, but more or less the same as last year.

78



Mark life First you have to lose your marker to make the most of the superb offensive AI.

2K Sports | PS3 | Out Now

NBA 2K8

Ace b-ball stunted by defensive mindset

NBA 2K8 reminds us quite a lot of NHL 2K7 and it's not just because there's only one digit and a couple of capitals letters difference in the titles. It's because *NHL 2K7* was a potentially great game almost ruined by one feature, a dash button that meant you could dispense with any clever passing play and just weave your way up the ice and take a shot

Locked out

Unfortunately *NBA 2K8* has a similar imbalance. It concerns the new lock-on defence, which is an interesting addition as it allows you to get any player with decent defensive stats to be all over their opposite number like a rash. It's supposed to give the defensive stars of NBA greater influence in the game – trouble is it ends up giving average player powers of creative suffocation as you get AI superstars trying every trick invented to get past their marker but failing miserably.

It's a case of a good idea not implemented correctly, and it takes the sheen off a sim that has good pedigree and some big improvements. For instance, there's a new dribbling animation system that places more emphasis on momentum and changes of direction than scripted crossovers and feints. Then there's offensive AI that separate shooting stats for nailing baskets when open or under pressure, encouraging you to move the ball around quickly to find a player in space.

It's sad that the ace visuals and sublime animation just add to the disappointment that *NBA 2K8* lacks the balance in the gameplay to make the most of these wonderful improvements. There's always *2K9*. **Dave Harrison**

PSM3 Verdict

An excellent sim let down by too-strong defenders. **76**

Pointing Guard The level of detail used for the players is amazing – you can even see their veins.

SNK | PS2 | Out Now

Art of Fighting Anthology

A history lesson – nothing more

***Art Of Fighting* has real heritage.** This was the second beat-'em-up series that SNK dreamt up after *Fatal Fury* and many of the characters fought on in *King Of Fighters*. Sadly there's little to capture the imagination of modern day gamers, and so the re-release of the three-game series is pretty pointless. This is 2D fighting at its most formative, and so it lacks the timeless flow and intensity of a Street Fighter or any of the visual flair and responsiveness of a contemporary game. Of course SNK have had much success by churning out *Metal Slug* games, but those titles have a charm and simplicity that Art of Fighting is sorely lacking.

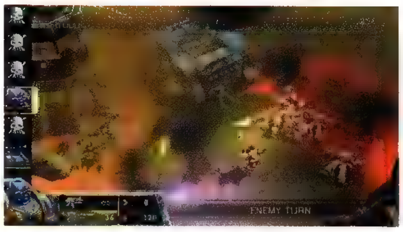
It's sad that we have to be so disrespectful to a series that was once at the cutting edge, but we're not too sure what relevance it has to anyone in 2007. Shame, really. **Dave Harrison**

48

THQ | PSP | Out now

Warhammer 40,000: Squad Command

Doesn't command attention for long



Think of *Final Fantasy Tactics* without the isometric grid and you've got the basic principle of *Squad Command*. You control a squad of six army guys against a team of Chaos forces but rather than moving a set amount of squares per turn you use Ability Points to both move and attack. Once your team has used all their AP the opposing team does the same. *Squad Command* benefits from losing the isometric grid.

The system is a little awkward though. Often you'll find yourself trying to shoot an enemy, aiming off centre and accidentally moving instead. There's no undo action, so you'll find yourself swearing at both yourself and the game. In addition enemies will shoot at you through windows, but you can't return fire through the shattered glass. The environments are destructible so you'll find yourself demolishing the place in order to clear a path rather than going the long way around.

Squad Command is flawed, but if you're a fan of *Warhammer*, this is worth a look. **Chris Robinson**

69

EA | PSP | Out now

Medal Of Honor: Heroes 2

Fiddly FPS underwhelms again

There's only so much EA can do to try and make you enjoy *MoH* on PSP. They can produce wartime action that plays similarly to the 'big console' versions – which they have. Then they can construct interesting multi-layered missions and objectives and make it look real nice... but if you're still not convinced by the PSP controls then you're just not going to enjoy *Heroes 2*.

Just like any first-person shooter on PSP, the character movement is carried out by the analogue stick, which means the action buttons have to cater for the aiming. It's the most sensible option but it's far from perfect and turns what could have been a very enjoyable blast into a laboured slog. Through hours of play you can come to establish some comfort with the controls, but the whole experience just feels too pedestrian for an FPS. This is an action-packed game with lots to get your teeth into, but you always feel reigned back by the fiddly controls. **Dave Harrison**

67

Sega | PSP | Out now

Sonic Rivals 2

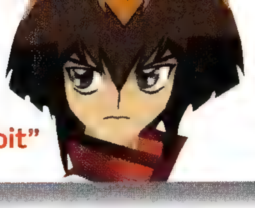
Quick, but not quick-witted

The idea behind *Sonic Rivals* is a good one, as it concentrates on getting Sonic to do what he's best at – zipping through levels at obscene speeds, which he does in a series of races against other characters from his troubled universe. Where the original *Sonic Rivals* came unstuck, however, was the implementation of a catch-up system that contrived a close finish no matter how well you negotiated the course. Thankfully this seems to have been corrected, and overall the racing is entertaining and plays like cartoony parkour mixed in with a bit of *Micro Machines*.

What would have been great is if the game was develop further with greater course variety and design. Sadly, it isn't. Instead boss battles and ring collecting competitions are used to pad out the action, both of which are frustrating rather than fun and seem out place with the rest of the game. The person who we really feel sorry for is Sonic, who doesn't seem able to catch a break at the moment – and we're tired of criticising him. But we'll carry on until Sega realise that Sonic is at his best when he's just *running*, pure and simple. Until then... **Dave Harrison**

61

GX Tag Force 2
"Follows the 'bigger' and 'more' rules of a sequel, but neglects the 'better' bit"



Sony | PS2 | Out now

Singstar Bollywood

For those that prefer Hindi to indie

00660
00220
P2
Bo - le chu - di - yan
Bo - le kan - ga - na

Usually you judge *SingStar* games by the quality of the tracklist, so when faced with 30 hits from Hindi cinema it all becomes a bit tricky. We've seen Mother India, but that's about it. The songs all come from relatively modern Bollywood films such as Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham and Guru. Many even come from the same film, and are presented in typical *SingStar* style with clips of the films in the background. The one difference is that lyrics are put up phonetically so the songs can be sung by those who don't know Hindi, Urdu of Punjabi. This makes a very unique experience, but also one that's incredibly hard, so taking away *SingStar*'s strength as a party game accessible to all. Consequently we suggest you leave this to those who love and know their Hindi. They will warmly receive this bold addition to the *SingStar* series. We'll just wait for a Eurovision version instead. **Dave Harrison**

70

Konami | PS2 | Out now

Yu-Gi-Oh! GX Tag Force 2

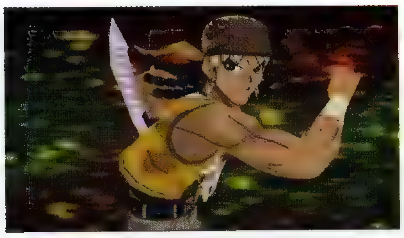
New heights of incomprehensible gaming

It's seems Konami have given up trying expanding the market when it comes to *Yu-Gi-Oh*, as *GX Tag Force 2* is pretty much impenetrable for the beginner. There is a tutorial, but even with that there's a good few hours learning before you can approach the game with much confidence.

But for those already *Yu-Gi-Oh*-ed up, this provides all the deck-tinkering and strategy you'd possibly want, with more cards than ever, cards exclusive to each copy of the game and further cards available to download. With a four-player mode and 10 new characters you have to applaud the thoroughness, but in terms of new features you'll be disappointed. It follows the 'bigger' and 'more' rules of a sequel, while neglecting the 'better' bit.

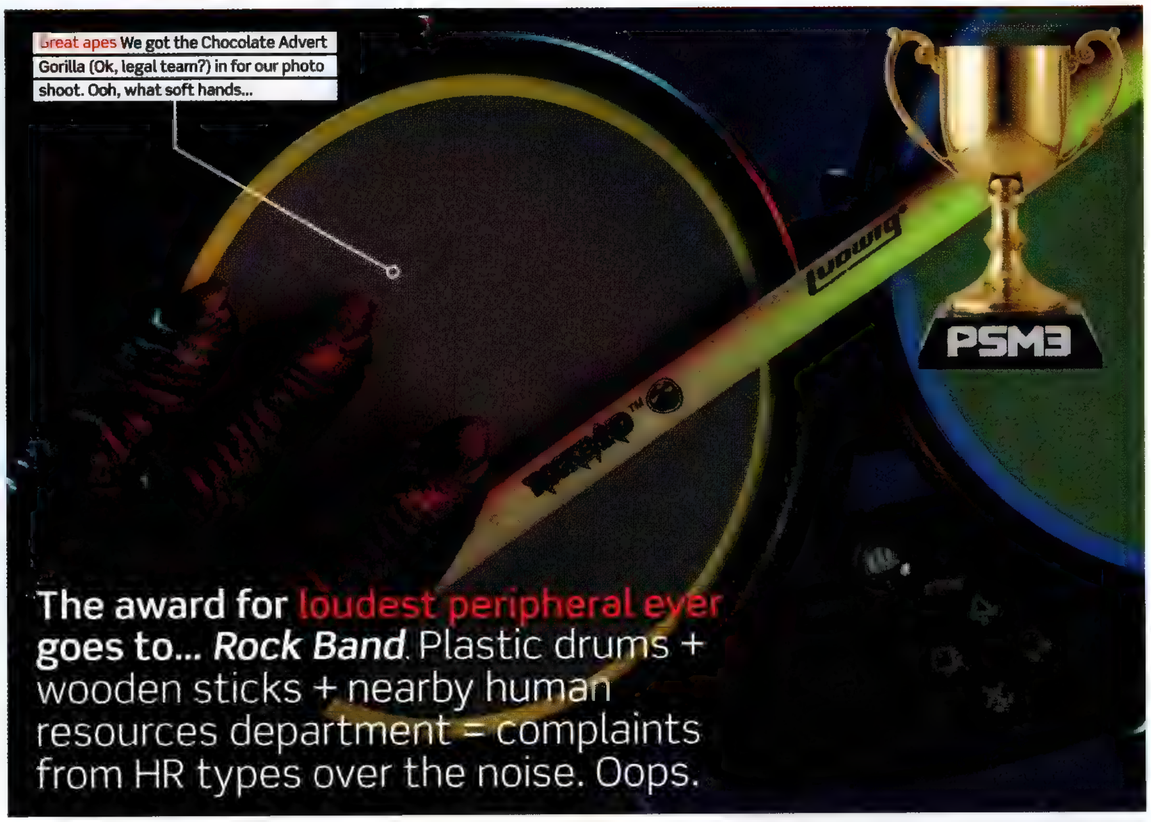
So with no real entry points for beginners and with new content that will only intrigue the truly hardcore, all *Tag Force 2* has to offer is the card gameplay – which is as rich as it's ever been, but has never really evolved. **Dave Harrison**

58



PSM3 Awards

The highlights (and lowlights) of this month's reviews



Great apes We got the Chocolate Advert Gorilla (Ok, legal team?) in for our photo shoot. Ooh, what soft hands...

The award for loudest peripheral ever goes to... *Rock Band*. Plastic drums + wooden sticks + nearby human resources department = complaints from HR types over the noise. Oops.

The top value award goes to...

Half-Life 2: The Orange Box
You can't argue, really – five pretty damn special games for the price of one, including *Portal* – one of the most brain-muddling puzzlers ever. Go buy.

The just too late award goes to...

TimeShift
There's a good chance that, if *TimeShift* had come out *before* *CoD4* raised the bar, we'd have liked it a bit more. As it is, it just feels outdated. Ah, well.

Buyer Beware! The games they're afraid to send us

Garfield: Lasagne World Tour Blast
A hunt for lasagne in Italy, Mexico and Egypt. What's the cat version of the glue factory?

Dogz Ubisoft
Inspired' by *Nintendogs*. "Check out what your puppy does when it's in a different room to you." Hmm.

Mr Bean Blast
A 3D platformer. Mr Bean goes hunting for his lost teddy. Perhaps he'll find the lost gameplay while he's at it.

Hi-Score Table

☐ The Orange Box	p70	90%
☐ Uncharted	p60	89%
☐ Rock Band	p54	88%
☐ FM Handheld 08	p78	80%
☐ PES 2008 (PS2)	p79	78%
☐ SF: Logan's Shadow	p64	77%
☐ DBZ: Budokai Tenkaichi 3	p78	77%
☐ NBA 2K8	p80	76%
☐ TimeShift	p76	72%
☐ NHL 2K8	p78	71%
☐ Piyotama	p79	70%
☐ SingStar Bollywood	p81	70%
☐ Medal Of Honor: Airborne	p66	69%
☐ Warhammer 40,000	p80	69%
☐ EyeToy Play: Astro Zoo	p79	68%
☐ Medal Of Honor Heroes 2	p80	67%
☐ Junior Monster Rumble	p78	62%
☐ Smackdown 2008 (PSP)	p79	62%
☐ Sonic Rivals 2	p80	61%
☐ Yu-Gi-Oh: GX Tag Force 2	p81	58%
☐ Snakeball	p79	54%
☐ The Golden Compass	p76	45%
☐ AvP: Requiem	p78	44%

Pub Activision | **Dev** Infinity Ward
Players 1-18 | **Genre** FPS
FYI The best reason to go online yet

ON THE DISC
See *Call Of Duty 4* get the review treatment
PS3/Reviews

NEVER LOSE ONLINE AT COD4

Clan Team VVV

Why are they so good?

Originally formed in May 2006, the pro-gaming team made its name in the racing genre, from *GT* to *Project Gotham*. The team gradually expanded its community and developed its skills base, leading to victories in competitions including the UK World Cyber Games, Matchbox XL and Xleague.tv. Team VVV now competes on all formats in all genres – including *Call Of Duty 4*, of course. To play them, or seek friendly advice visit their website and popular general gaming forum at www.teamvvv.com.

VVV
VENI VIDI VICI / I CAME. I SAW. I CONQUERED.

Call Of Duty 4 tips

"You often see players losing their heads – in more ways than one"

Learn *Call of Duty 4's* online secrets from the world's best players... only in PSM3

We play a lot of online *Call of Duty 4* - in fact, most team members play for a few hours a night. But while we're good, usually finishing in the top four of Free-For-All matches, and winning the odd game, there's always someone who's better – the 50+ ranking veteran who's a step ahead. That's why we've asked that person - or rather, lots of them - to give you the ultimate guide to *CoD4*.

Team VVV are one of the UK's, if not the world's (see 'Clan Team VVV') leading games clans. "The chaotic scenes of *Call Of Duty 4* online can be daunting at first," claims clan member Alan Boiston. "New players often run headlong into battle, only to die every few seconds. Besides creating a growing frustration, this will also demolish your stats – and potentially damage any possible respect from the hardcore online community."

So how do you become John Rambo and do the business? "The key is staying calm and focused, with a good idea of your surroundings," reveals Alan. Whether you play alone or in online squads, this guide will cover the initial strategies you need to make it happen.

Why play online?

"Going online can be initially daunting," reassures Alan. "Some may find it nerve-racking, feeling every move they make is being analysed. Yes, there is more competition online, and if you think you're great you'll always find someone better, but it's better to relax and enjoy the experience. Take your time – and the game's key skills will slot into place."

Team up with friends and rule the world...

"Creating a team of complete strangers can be tough," confesses Alan, "But if you are able to find some like-minded people - or if your friends decide they enjoy regular games of Call *Of Duty 4* - then there's no better way to enjoy yourself online. Team gaming isn't just for experts - taking the time to learn some basic tactics can improve the performance of any given player immensely. Team gaming is for anyone and should be looked at as a social activity, not just something for the elite pro gamers to enjoy." The following pages outline essential solo - and team - strategies, plus reveal key weapons and perks. If you like what you read, we'll have more - much more - next month...

Ten essential *CoD4* tips

How to go from naive rookie to grizzled, kill-crazy veteran

1 Focus on your favourite game type

Choose the mode that suits you best. Domination is often a good, fun way to get used to the maps and to learn where opponents are likely to come from. Become aware of your surroundings and it'll make you a better player – one less likely to be surprised by where enemy attacks are coming from and ready to take the appropriate course of action.

2 Learn the spawns

Spawns can alter in every mode, and constantly evolve depending on where your team-mates are positioned. Learn roughly where your team-mates should stand to control spawning, and a controlling grip on the level can be assured. Victory awaits.

3 Name map areas

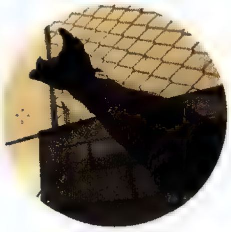
So you see an enemy getting past your lines. He runs past a bush – but which bush? Always give simple, quick-to-pronounce names to different parts of maps. This way your team-mates will know the exact location of the opponent and can make adjustments.

4 Judge your perks

If you're playing with perks, you need to know the ones that support your playing style, be it aggressive or defensive. Consider your role within the team and what you'll be doing to ensure victory. Try everything out at least once, if only to gain a full understanding of which playing style you're most confident with.

5 Grenade tricks

Often referred to online as 'trick nades', these are grenades skilfully thrown within a few metres of enemy spawns at the beginning of games. Also take into account any vehicles – these can create chain explosions, which are very powerful. Practice in this area and a vital early advantage can be secured.



6 Random movement

In battle, headshots count, though some perks make this less important. Movement is key, and erratic movement in a gunfight can throw your opponent off. Jumping or bobbing away from where your enemy expects can be vital to winning one-on-one gunfights.

7 Combine fire

Often it's short, controlled bursts of fire that win a gunfight, though the urge is often there to play chicken with your opponent. Avoid this by communicating effectively with your team-mates and combining fire. This also aids in combining perks, so if you don't have Deep Impact, use theirs.

8 Patience

Always key. It's not about racking up the kills, but securing the objective. This makes the difference in every game type. Stay calm, don't get flustered and always focus on the job at hand.

9 Communication

One of the most important aspects, and one that's essential to teamwork. Naming map areas and giving constant feedback is key. This does not come naturally to everyone, but working with your team-mates will always yield the best results. Just keep talking and you'll be just fine. Really.

10 Learn from experience

Despite all of this, losses are inevitable – the key is to learn why you were defeated. If tactics were used against you, rip them off. Learn from experience – don't be afraid to try new things, and practice, practice, practice.

Which weapons should you use?

This month: Why Assault Rifles are the best all-round weapons

Starting out is out tough, but by focusing on a favoured weapon, you can quickly gain the attachments – e.g. red dot sight – to make it a killer. Not only that, but weapon selection can be key, depending on the map and your role with the team. e.g. Uzis are useful on the tight corridors of Vacant.

Assault rifles are easily the most flexible weapons. As you progress you'll unlock add-ons , none more important than the Red Dot sight. A zoom with superb detail and excellent peripheral vision, it's effective in almost any situation. The long-range Acog scope's range is offset by its slow speed.

M16A4

Recommended for: Intermediate

The classic starting weapon. Great stopping power aimed more for the intermediate player, which fires in bursts of three bullets. This weapon is best used in short, controlled, accurate bursts.

AK-47

Recommended for: Intermediate/Expert

Another classic, designed for the Intermediate to expert player. Powerful but inaccurate at long range with a lot of recoil to contend with. It is recommended to practice with the M16 before trying this.

M4 Carbine

Recommended for: Beginner

Generally the best starting weapon for novices, the M4 Carbine tends to be good at spraying enemies. While it can be great fun to use, as you become more accurate this weapon will begin to show its flaws.

G3

Recommended for: Veterans

Aimed at experienced or expert players, highly accurate at medium to long range but without the stopping power at short range. The G3 is excellent in the hands of those who know how to use it.

G36C

Recommended for: Intermediate

The G36C is best used in short to mid-range and fires at a very high rate. Though this rate of fire is vital, the weapon tends to lack the stopping power of others – requiring greater accuracy.

M14

Recommended for: Intermediate

A single-fire shot similar to the G3 but with greater stopping power – though inconsistent at long range. Again a good weapon if you know where to use it effectively, but this will take time to master.

MP44

Recommended for: Expert

Designed for the absolute expert players, this semi automatic – with several restrictions, including a limitation on additional sights – requires players to use absolutely pinpoint accuracy.

Quick tips

- ► Keep moving. Don't dwell in open space. Cover your angles.
- ► Focus on one weapon and game mode to rank up quick.
- ► Pick your shots. Use Stopping Power. Loose fire = reveals your position = death.
- ► Lob 'lucky' grenades into populated areas.
- ► Learn the maps. Watch and learn from those who kill you.

The top five perks

The best perks to help your unstoppable rise to victory

Extreme Conditioning

Enables players to run for longer while helping to gain initial ground at the beginning of matches. This is often used by snipers who wish to move swiftly round the outside of maps and, while being quick to attack, can get out of trouble sharpish.

Bandolier

There's nothing like running out of bullets to make life tough, and it can happen often. This usually means attempting to find another weapon on the floor and more often than not this can result in an untimely death. Additional rounds of ammo are critical, making this perk vital.

Stopping Power

Increases the power of your bullets, thus enabling players to kill opponents more quickly with body shots. Works well with all weapons and can be vital for those one on one close encounters. Remember, once you've opened fire, you're visible, so time is of the essence.

Deep Impact

A simple perk by nature, but if used effectively can work well on opponents who are camping in difficult spots. So if the opponent is in a corner you simply can't get to, walk to the adjacent room and shoot them through the wall. You're hitting them when the cursor changes shape.

Martyrdom

Drops a grenade when you die – this perk is seen by many as king. Killing lots of enemies can see a flurry of grenades all over the place, which are difficult to avoid. The perk is best used in Headquarters mode, where a grenade kill can give the vital seconds required to win.

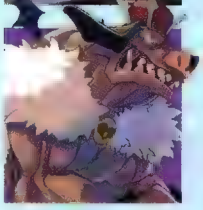
Playing PlayStation Longer Harder Deeper

Extended Play

Start

CELEBRATE
86 **_SingStar_ makes musical heroes of us all** The already-massive history of the world's greatest party game.

GENIUS
88 **The 10 most hilarious moments in _The Simpsons Game_** Forget the gameplay, feel the laughs.


EXPLOITS
92 **Unveiling all of _Disgaea_'s super moves** The most amazing combat moves in this most in-depth of RPGs.

SECRETS
94 **Drifting around... and around... and around in _Juiced 2_** Cause havoc round the base of the Eiffel Tower.

SECRETS
95 **PlayStation's darkest secrets exposed to the light** Playing as *Lego Indy* is *LSW: Complete Saga*.

CHEATS
95 **The hottest cheats around** Featuring *Smackdown 2008*, *The Simpsons Game* and *THPG*.

ONLINE
96 **Adding thousands to the casualties of war in _Call Of Duty 4_ online** The greatest online game ever? Maybe.

CLASSIC
98 **Why _Psi-Ops_ works the mind more than any other game** Busting people's brains open with telekinesis.

PLAYSTATION CELEBRATION

SingStar tops the charts

Maybe you love *Ratchet & Clank*. Possibly you're enamoured with *MotorStorm*'s phenomenal physics engine. But when people come round, there's only one game that you need to have, and that's Sony's all-conquering pub karaoke-killer. With *SingStar* PS3 letting you download any tune from the entire series for a quid a pop, let's see some of its highs and lows. Now *that's* what we call music.

ok!
cool!
good!

SINGSTAR

The series kicks off with a smattering of boyband tunes and a Career mode that, thankfully, never reared its head again. Singing Westlife tunes to 'unlock' everything else just isn't appealing.
Best track The lungbusting Take On Me – more demanding than being a freediver.
Worst track Busted's Crashed The Wedding.

SINGSTAR POPWORLD

SingStar goes licensed, although Simon Amstell and Miquita Oliver spend most of the intro film looking terrified and bewildered.
Best track Crazy In Love.
Worst track Outkast must have hired an eight-year old to write Hey Ya follow-up Roses. They "smell like poo-poo", apparently.

SINGSTAR PARTY

The second game in the series introduced the now-standard duet dynamic, with tracks like Destiny's Child's Survivor. Beautiful stuff.
Best track Duran Duran's seminal classic Hungry Like The Wolf.
Worst track '80s pop munchkin Tiffany warbling I Think We're Alone Now. It's like eating raw sugar.

SINGSTAR '80S

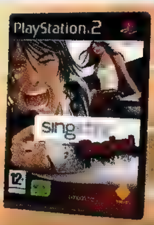
SingStar cashes in on *Vice City*-flavoured nostalgia with 20-odd power ballads, rap with no swears in it and bubblegum pop. Shame they used the English version of 99 Red Balloons, though.
Best track Run DMC's It's Tricky's a strong candidate for best duet ever, but how can you not love Starship's We Built This City?
Worst track Billy Joel's Uptown Girl. It's just horrible.

SINGSTAR LEGENDS

A slightly flimsy update based on Sony's misunderstanding of the word 'legend'. Depeche Mode and the Pet Shop Boys? Yeah, they don't qualify sorry.
Best track Probably Roxanne.
Worst track Reet Petite? Unchained Melody? Imagine? Bleurgh.

awful!

SINGSTAR ROCKS!



Or, as it could be called, *SingStar For Boys* – the throatiest, shoutiest edition of the series to date.
Best track It's tough to sing, but you can't do Maximo Park's Apply Some Pressure without leaping around and wishing your trousers were tighter.
Worst track KT Tunstall? What, does someone in marketing fancy her?

awful!

SINGSTAR R&B

Again, not really one for the older crowd. And if you still like singing Bob Marley songs, buy yourself an acoustic guitar and get yourself to Thailand with all the other hippies, hippy.
Best track Bootylicious. No, you simply aren't ready for PSM3's jelly. Sorry.
Worst track Pump It – a clunker from Black Eyed Peas.

great!

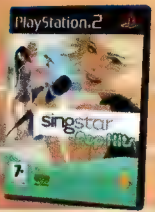
good!

SINGSTAR '90S

Decision to replicate the success of *'80s*? Good. Decision to do it with a decade that didn't have a defining style of music? Terrible.
[illegible] Cranberries' Zombie. But as it's up against the Crash Test Dummies and EMF, that isn't saying much.
Worst track You can't even even sing Barbie Girl ironically. PUT THE MIC DOWN.

ok!

SINGSTAR POP HITS



If you don't care who's number one any more, this is not the game for you. Unless you just want to stare at Girls Aloud and Nelly Furtado.
Best track Baby One More Time.
Worst track "I'm still Jenny from the block," announces J-Lo. "I used to have a little, now I have the biggest tour rider in history."

bad!

SINGSTAR BOLLYWOOD

Probably brilliant if you watch Bollywood films. The subtitles are done phonetically, so you don't need Hindi or Urdu to sing...
Best track Definitely Aksar's Jhalak Dikhla Ja. Classic.
Worst track Tauba Tauba's a lazy effort from the normally excellent Kaal. Oh, yes.

cool!

ok!

good!

brilliant!

SINGSTAR ANTHEMS

Anybody expecting a rousing take on Deutschland Uber Alles or the Star Spangled banner should've been warned off by the half-naked firemen in Sony's ad campaign. Yes, this is about *those* sorts of anthems.
Best track Look, if you kiss another man while you're singing Total Eclipse Of The Heart, that's basically fine.
Worst track Can't Fight The Moonlight. Sadly, LeAnn Rhymes wasn't available to comment on what the hell that actually means.

SINGSTAR ROCK BALLADS

Not to be confused with *Rocks*, this one's basically an excuse to do some more sweat-drenched '80s power rock. And it's brilliant.
Best track We're still not sure exactly what Meat Loaf won't do for love, but he's a big fat dynamo just the same.
Worst track Wait, two songs by Mr Mister? Broken Wings is tolerable, but Kyrie's a step too far.

SINGSTAR PS3

SingStar goes all shiny and next-gen with downloadable wallpaper and hundreds of new songs promised. Basically essential, unless you're a desperate shut-in.
Best track The Killers' Mr Brightside. We'd prefer All These Things That I've Done, but that'll be downloadable soon, right? *Right?*
Worst track Does anyone like Pass The Dutchie? Seriously?

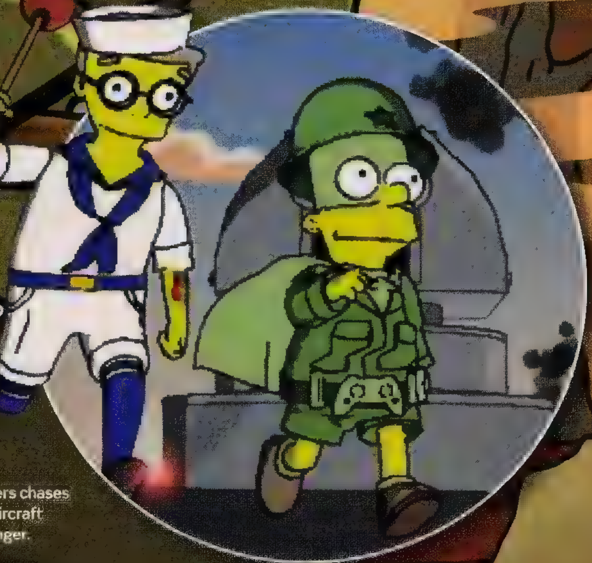
ON THE DISC
See *The Simpsons Game* in action on the disc
[illegible]

Pub EA
Dev EA Redwood Shores
FYI PS3 | 2007 | PSM95 70%
Weak gameplay – almost broken in places – but the jokes come so thick and fast it's difficult to care. As a piece of entertainment, nothing beats it

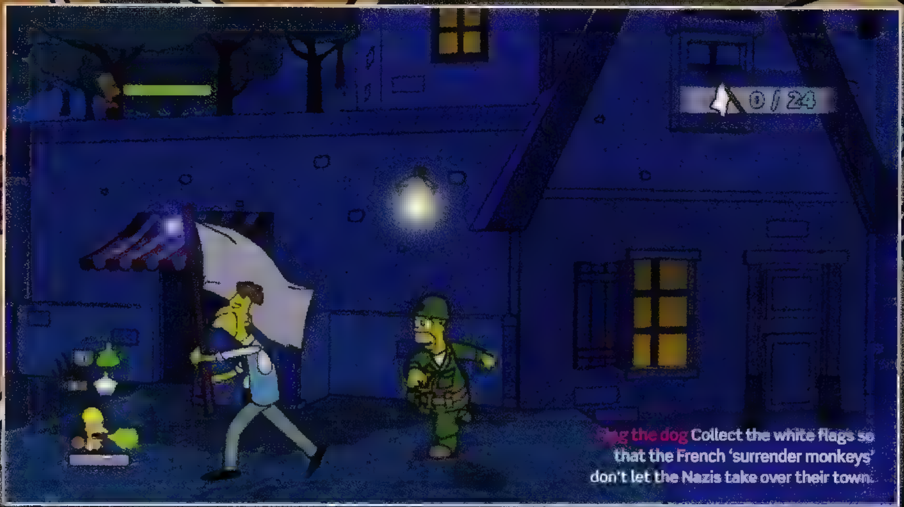
PLAYSTATION GENIUS

10 Genius moments from The Simpsons

Andy Kelly



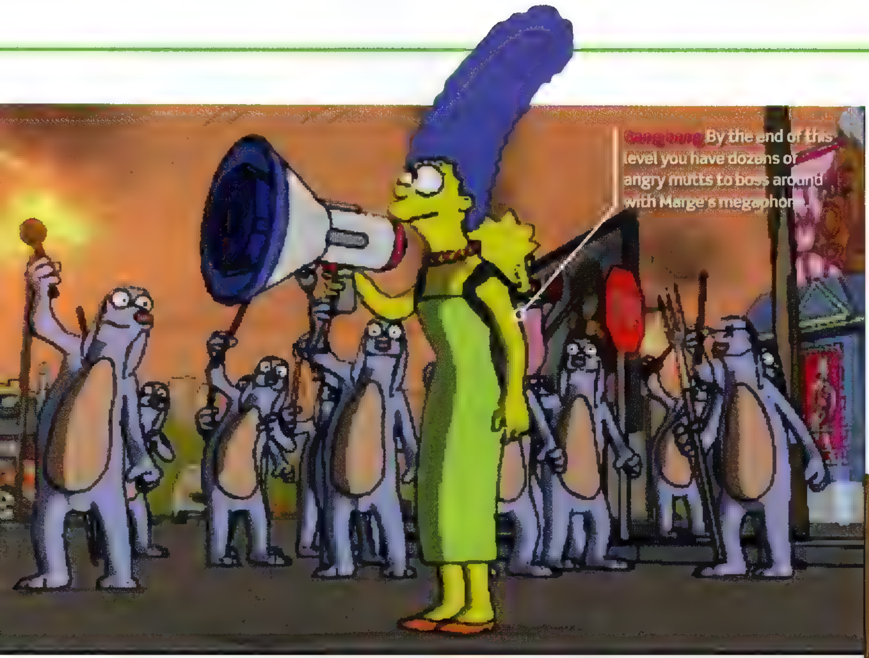
Navy blue Smithers chases Bart around the aircraft carrier with a plunger.



Wag the dog Collect the white flags so that the French 'surrender monkeys' don't let the Nazis take over their town.

1 MEDAL OF HOMER

From the funereal trumpets of Michael Giacchino's familiar theme tune to the mission briefing where the camera pans slowly across a desk covered in maps and enemy intel, Medal Of Homer is one *The Simpsons Game*'s cleverest parodies. In the first level you have to clear a French village of white flags so they don't surrender to the Nazis – basically an excuse to slag off France. Later there's an escort mission, on which the Comic Book Guy comments "Oh, an escort mission in a war game? *Real* original."

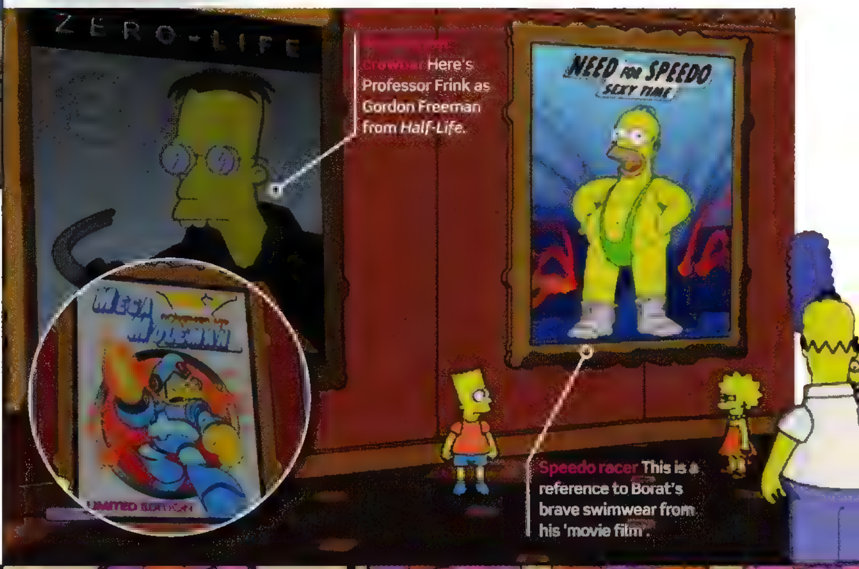


Gang bang By the end of this level you have dozens of angry mutts to boss around with Marge's megaphone.

3

THE PARODY POSTERS

We lost count of how many of these there are in the game. Some of our favourites include Need For Speedo: Sexy Time, Mega Moleman X, Calamari Damacy and Moral Combat, in which a shirtless Ned Flanders brandishes a bible menacingly. There's also a clever jab at the *Madden* series, with a line of posters that are all identical except the year and colour. Maddening '06, Maddening '07, Maddening '08...



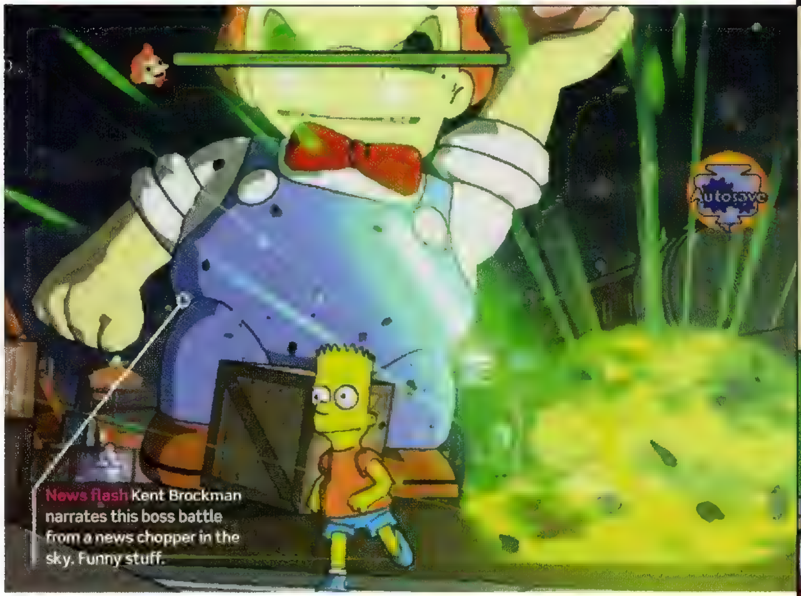
[illegible] Crowbar Here's Professor Frink as Gordon Freeman from *Half-Life*.

Speedo racer This is a reference to Borat's brave swimwear from his 'movie film'.

2

CLEANING UP THE STREETS

Upon entering the Grand Theft Scratchy game world, Marge is shocked to find it swarming with pimps, hoes and gangsters. "I love gangster rap, but I hate gangsters," she mutters as she recruits an enormous gang of 'dawgs' to literally clean up the town, replacing its brothels and strip clubs with cake shops and community centres, and changing the hip-hop station's music to a soppy Elton John song.



News flash Kent Brockman narrates this boss battle from a news chopper in the sky. Funny stuff.

4

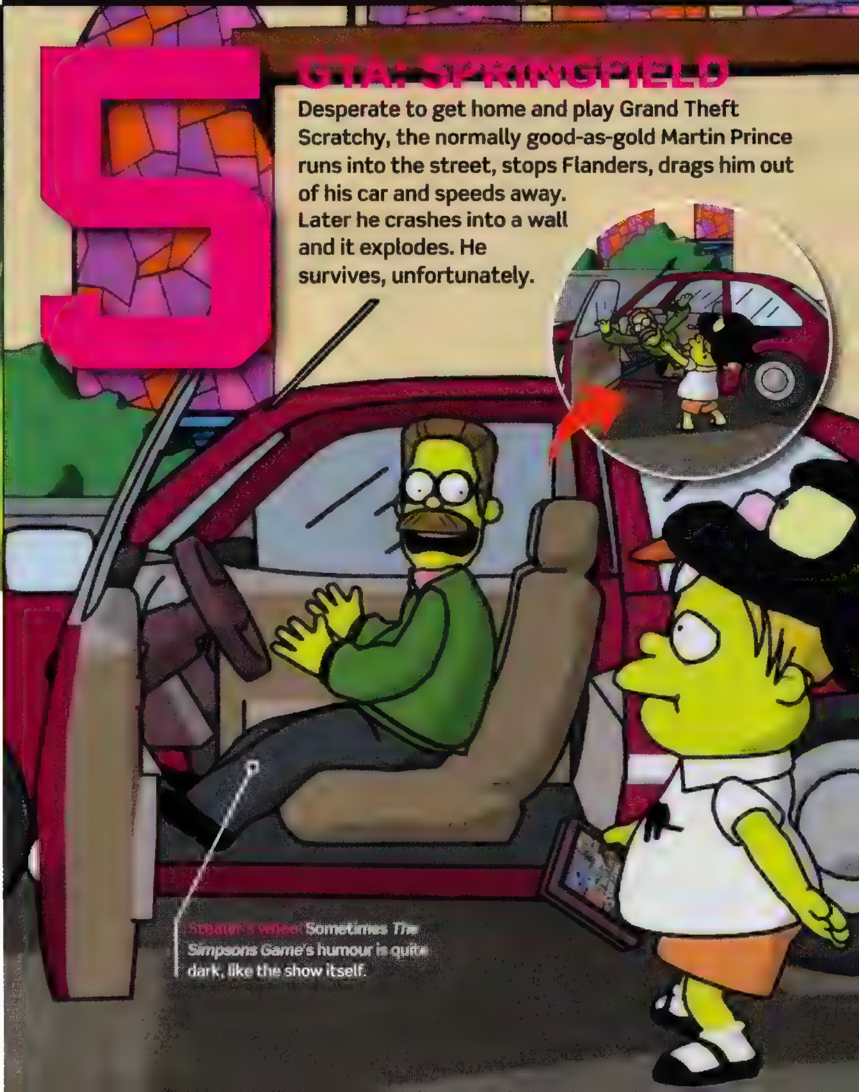
SHADOW OF THE LARD LAD

This boss battle is a parody of Team Ico's *Shadow Of The Colossus*. To defeat the marauding Lard Lad donut mascot you have to find a way to open its weak spot, then climb up and attack it. For the first attack you can leap on from a rooftop, but later you have to inflate Homer full of helium, float up, land on a tiny platform and destroy his innards. This is one of *The Simpsons Game*'s best-looking levels.

5

GTA: SPRINGFIELD

Desperate to get home and play Grand Theft Scratchy, the normally good-as-gold Martin Prince runs into the street, stops Flanders, drags him out of his car and speeds away. Later he crashes into a wall and it explodes. He survives, unfortunately.

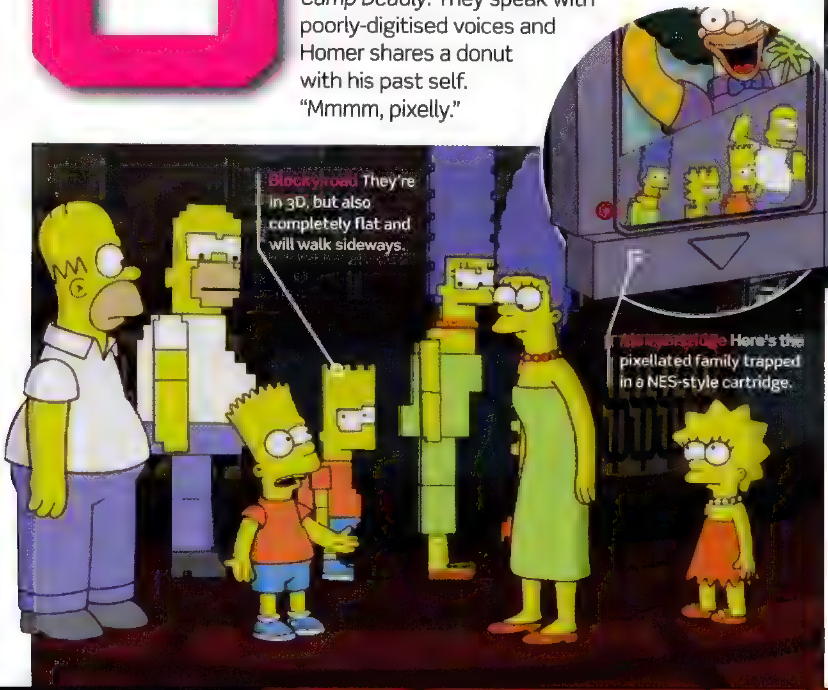


Stealer's wheel Sometimes *The Simpsons Game*'s humour is quite dark, like the show itself.

6

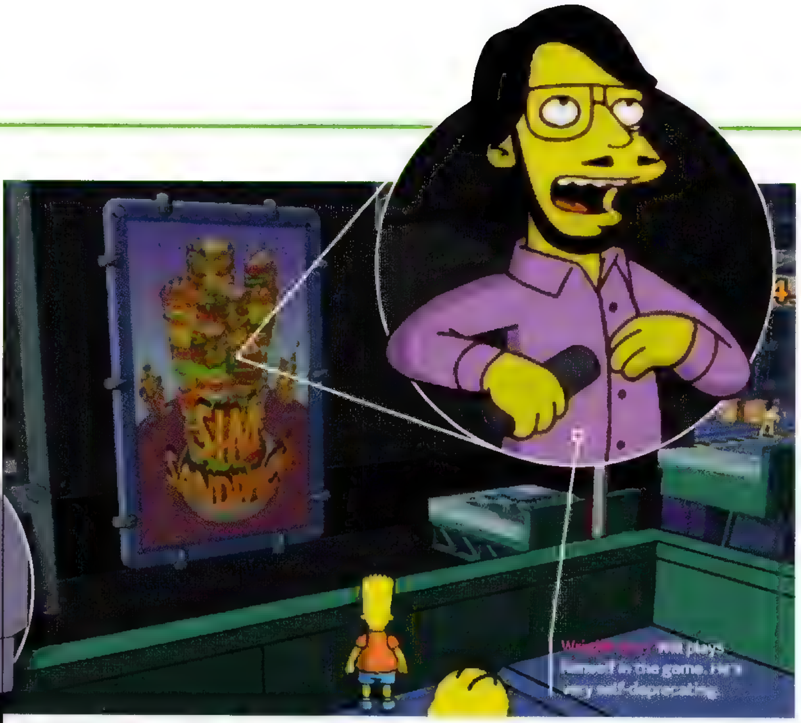
THE 8-BIT SIMPSONS

In the Game Engine level, you meet The Simpsons family circa-1991 from the fictional game Escape From Krusty Island, an obvious parody of the real – and utterly rubbish – Simpsons game *Escape From Camp Deadly*. They speak with poorly-digitised voices and Homer shares a donut with his past self. "Mmmm, pixelly."



Blocky road They're in 3D, but also completely flat and will walk sideways.

[illegible] Here's the pixellated family trapped in a NES-style cartridge.



[illegible] Will plays himself in the game. He's very self-deprecating.

7

RUNNING WILL WRIGHT'S GAUNTLET

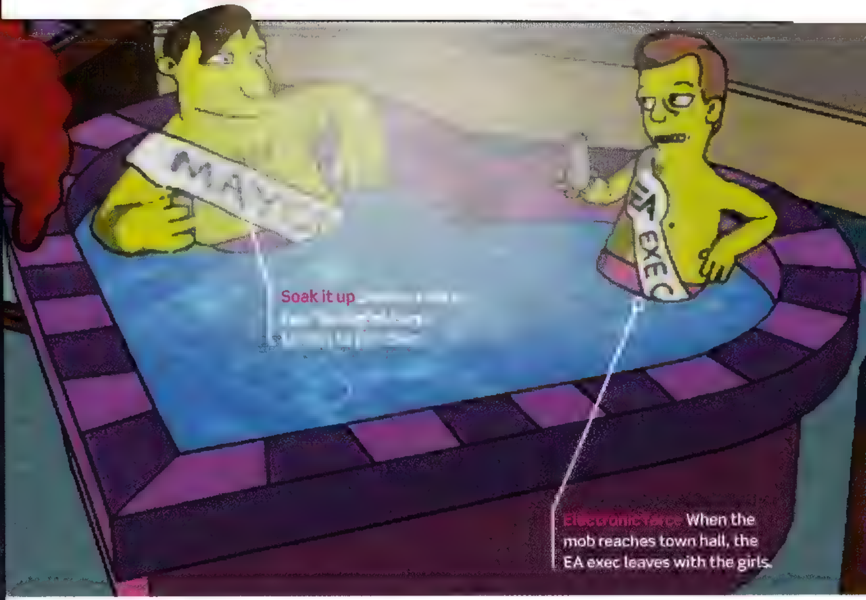
"I'm the nerdiest nerd in the computerverse," explains *Sims* creator Will Wright as he pushes his glasses up his nose. "I'm Will Wright, bitch!" This cameo by the games industry 'celebrity' will be lost on a lot of people, but it's a great one for *Sims* fans. He forces the Simpsons to run a twisted obstacle course to rescue their 8-bit selves. His lair's full of posters for abandoned *Sims* games, including Sim Sandwich.

Rake it easy Kelsey Grammar supplies the voice of Sideshow Bob in the game. Ace.

8

SIDESHOW BOB

Bart and Homer discover the man behind an alien invasion was, yep, Sideshow Bob. As the lunatic foolishly reveals his plan he steps on a rake and gets thwacked in the mug. Simple, but this tribute to one of the series' classic segments is easily the funniest moment in the entire game. "You should never send an ex-TV clown to do a man's job," say the aliens as they flee.



Soak it up [illegible]

Electronic farce When the mob reaches town hall, the EA exec leaves with the girls.

9

QUIMBY AND THE EA EXEC

As angry Springfield residents descend upon the town hall to stop sales of Grand Theft Scratchy, Mayor Quimby relaxes in a hot tub with an unnamed EA executive who gleefully accepts a bribe from the corrupt politician. Whenever Quimby mentions the exec's name we hear a series of beeps, as if the game's been censored by EA. Funny stuff, and one of many jokes at Electronic Arts' expense.

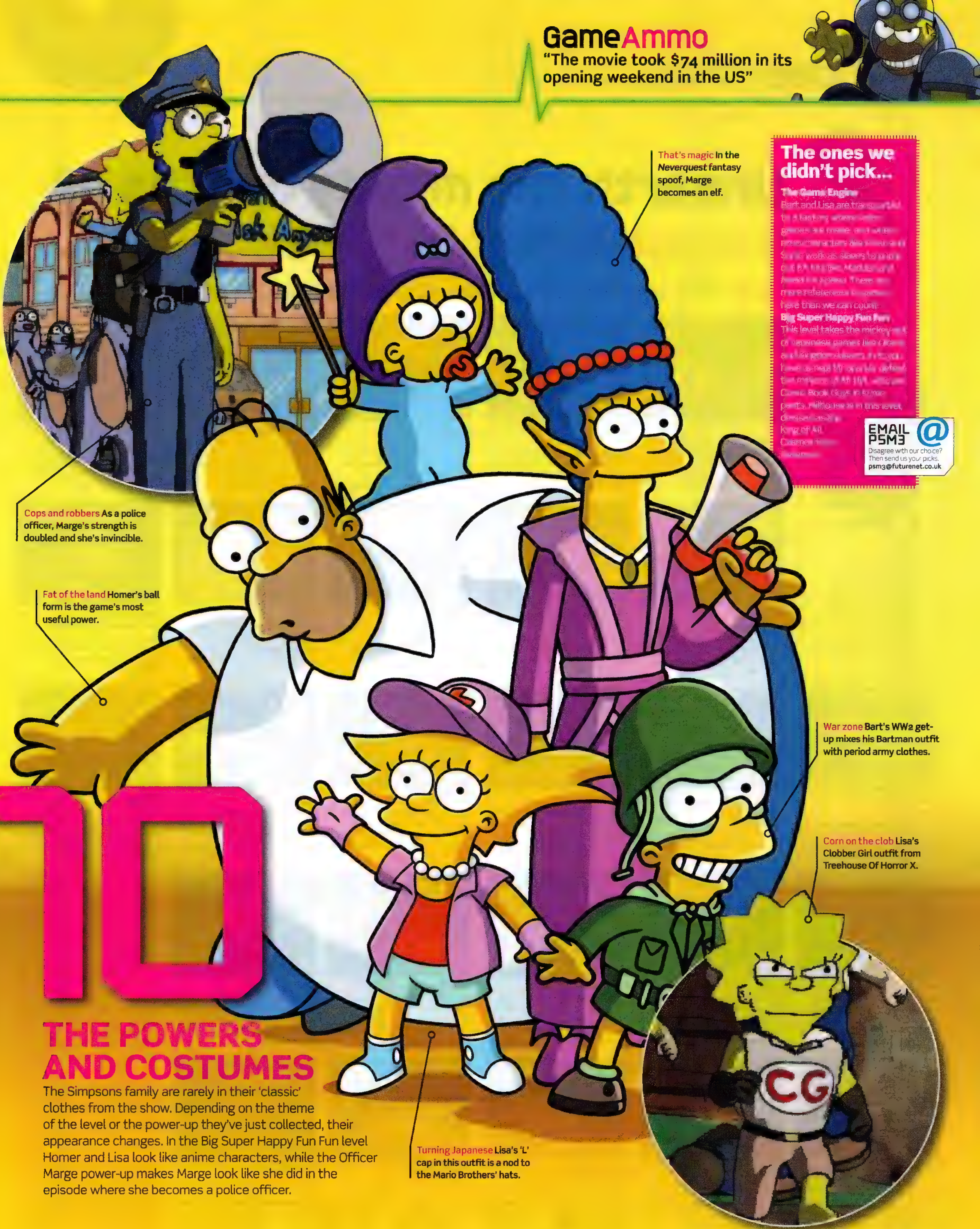
GameAmmo

"The movie took $74 million in its opening weekend in the US"

10

THE POWERS AND COSTUMES

The Simpsons family are rarely in their 'classic' clothes from the show. Depending on the theme of the level or the power-up they've just collected, their appearance changes. In the Big Super Happy Fun Fun level Homer and Lisa look like anime characters, while the Officer Marge power-up makes Marge look like she did in the episode where she becomes a police officer.



Cops and robbers As a police officer, Marge's strength is doubled and she's invincible.

Fat of the land Homer's ball form is the game's most useful power.

That's magic In the *Neverquest* fantasy spoof, Marge becomes an elf.

War zone Bart's WW2 get-up mixes his Bartman outfit with period army clothes.

Corn on the clob Lisa's Clobber Girl outfit from Treehouse Of Horror X.

Turning Japanese Lisa's 'L' cap in this outfit is a nod to the Mario Brothers' hats.

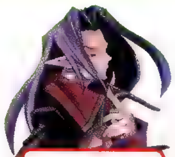
The ones we didn't pick...

The Game Engine Bart and Lisa are trans[illegible] to a fantasy [illegible] games [illegible] [illegible] Sonic works as slaves [illegible] EA [illegible] Madden and Need for Speed. There are more references [illegible] here than we can count.

Big Super Happy Fun Fun This level takes the mickey out of Japanese games like [illegible] [illegible] Comic Book Guy in [illegible] pants, [illegible] in this level, dressed as the King of All Cosmos [illegible]

EMAIL PSM3
Disagree with our choice? Then send us your picks.
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

ON THE DISC
Watch *Disgaea 3* on PS3 in action on this month's disc



PLAYSTATION EXPLOITS

Unearth the mighty depths of Disgaea: Hour Of Darkness

Steve Baily

KERPOW

The 25 snazziest special powers

EMAIL PSM3 @
Want a game exploded in ludicrous detail? Tell us:
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

Pub Koei
Dev Nippon Ichi
FYI PS2 | 2004 | PSM49 86%

Disgaea shook things up by tearing the strategy RPG rules into confetti. It hands you an insane amount of freedom and flexibility, and even rewards you for attempting to pervert or exploit the game's framework. And all it asks in return is several hundred hours of your life.

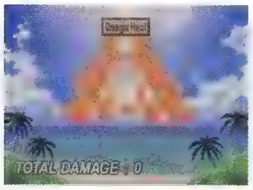
There's much more to *Disgaea*'s combat system than just a selection of special moves. They're just the icing on the cake. But they're a flashy aspect of an otherwise simple-looking game, and contain plenty of imagination.

Prinny class... The Prinny Barrage

Jumping into the air, the Prinny fires waves of spinning blades at an opponent. It only hits one enemy, but can be used from a fair old distance away.

Hoggmeiser... The Megaton Crush

The pig-demon conjures up a swirl of boulders, and flings them into enemies, resulting in a mighty explosion. A "legendary super technique", apparently.



Cleric class... Omega Heal

If you've got to heal one of your team, there's no finer choice than this. Trouble is, you can only use it on one square of the map, so getting your wounded soul there can be a task in itself.

Prier... Requiem Aeternam

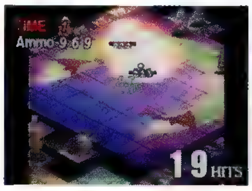
Able to be used over great distances, this transports a number of opponents to a mystical plain, where the floor tiles erupt in pillars of light that cause masses of damage to all foes involved.

Flonne... Divine Ray

Flonne's "Ultimate atttaaaaccck!" sees her sprouting wings and channelling the power of God into a super-destructive beam that rains down on a huge portion of the map.

Killer Armour class... Blade Frenzy

Slashes an opponent before spinning into the air and jabbing them to shreds. Oh, and the background goes all funky-crazy, just to ram that violence home.



Scout class... Dark Cannon

Lets you plonk a gun turret on the map, and shoot it at the bad guys for 10 seconds. After that, though, it just attacks everyone indiscriminately, so be very careful with it.

Laharl... Meteor Impact

Summoning an enormous fiery meteor, Laharl leaps onto it and rides it, Dr Strangelove-style, into a bunch of enemies, laughing manically as he goes. Odd fella.

Serpent class... Supernova

The shark-like serpent draws in a great breath, before puking a blizzard of freezing ice into a V-shaped spread of opponents. Careful not to hit your own team, y'hear?

Prinny class... The Pringer Beam

"The finishing move of the legendary robot, Pringer X!" Up in the air, the Prinny fires a piddly-looking laser that, somehow, causes a nuclear-strength fallout.

Koropokkuru class... Camaraderie

Conjures a magic portal, through which allies drop through and onto the heads of enemies. Like hailstones, but heavier and deadlier. It's not that powerful, though.

Gordon... Gordon Blitz

Pummels a single opponent with a flurry of kick-ass punches and knuckle sandwiches. Even ends with a cheesy one-liner, as is Gordon's typically heroic (but dim-witted) style.

Succubus... Hip Attack

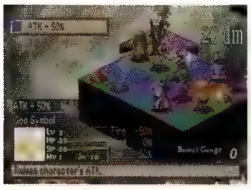
Every Succubus attack is described as 'sexy' by the in-game blurb, but this actually *is* – use a hip wiggle to suck energy out of your opponent. Lapdancing meets vampirism.

Laharl... Overlord's Wrath

Dozens of glowing orbs are drawn out of the ground, the camera pans and – "Bite the dust!" – Laharl hurls them into a distant group of enemies like dynamite-stuffed basketballs.

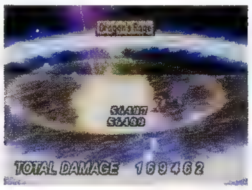
Hoggmeiser... Earthshaker

Tunnelling underground, Hoggmeiser surprises enemies by bursting out of the ground with a mighty Ken-style dragon punch. Useful if you want to knock out an enemy close to your allies.



Scout... Geo Change

'Geo panels' can cause squares of the map to contain special effects, like bonus damage. With Geo Change, you can randomise those panels. Worth the risk, if you're stuck with some nasty effects.



Prier... Dragon's Rage

Prier teleports her victim to a distant slab of rock, where she proceeds to blat them with a volley of punishing hits, including some "formidable strikes" with her magical staff. Ouch.

Flonne... Holy Arrows

Leaping up and uttering a cute apology ("Sorry! I won't hold back!"), Flonne fires a salvo of feather-shaped arrows out of a magical portal and into a clutch of enemies. Take that.

KitCat class... Delta Kick

First an uppercut to launch an opponent, followed by a massive slam sending them into the ground. KitCat follows up by thundering downwards into her battered foe with an almighty boot.

Etna... Sexy Beam

Etna soars into the sky and fires a deadly laser beam towards the ground below, in a pattern that traces out a blocky love heart, damaging whoever it hits. They do say love hurts.

Disgaea FAQ

Q A 'strategy' RPG? Surely all RPGs are strategic?

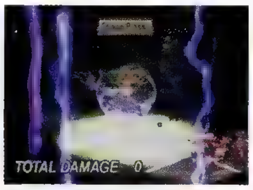
A SRPGs [illegible]

Q So I'd need to put overtime into it, eh?

A Not at all. You need [illegible] hidden content.

Shaitan class... The Raging Burst

Pulsating with anger, the Shaitan summons a pillar of flame into which all adjacent opponents are swirled up into, before crashing back down to earth.



Nosferatu Class... The Chaos Plasma

Annihilating enemies with "no remorse!", this chucks up to eight bad guys into the air, before a crackling ball of plasma jolts them all with forks of lightning.

Dragon class... The Dragonic Furor

Pouncing high up into the sky, the Dragon creates a sizzling ball of power between its claws, then belts it into a pack of enemies down below.

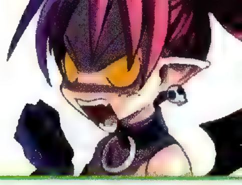
Golem class... The Psionic Wave

Floating up into the air on a cushion of wind and rocks, the chunky Golem belches rings of sizzling psi power at a beleaguered opponent.

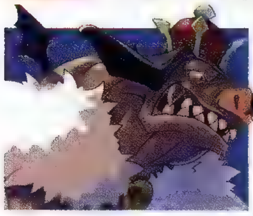
Treant class... The Pounding Spree

Comedy wrestling move time – grab an opponent and slam them back and forth into the ground in front and behind you. Did we say comedy? We meant MURDER.

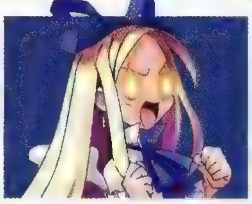
"A PSP version of *Disgaea*, dubbed *Afternoon Of Darkness*, is out now"



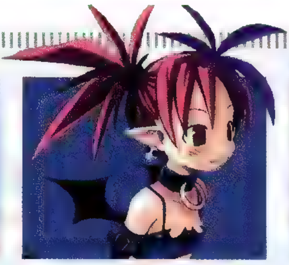
BARMY The five biggest freaks



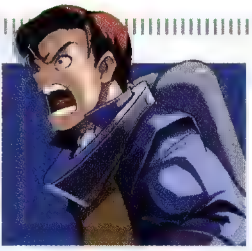
Disgaea compensates for its decade-old looks with a sharp art style and characters colourful enough to power a multitude of MTV reality shows. But most of these goofballs are on your side.



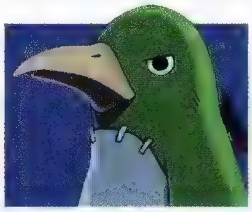
Freak one... Flonne
An angel in training, ditzy Flonne arrived in the underworld to assassinate Laharl's father. A 'love freak', she's all innocent – until something sets her eyes aflame.



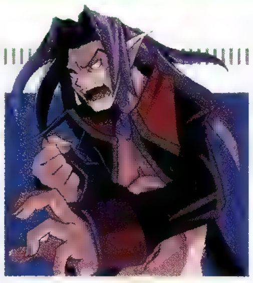
Freak two... Etna
Those Prinny freaks? They belong to this troublemaker. A servant to lead character Laharl, Etna presents her own TV show in between chapters of the story.



Freak three... Gordon
A dumbass who attempts to prevent Laharl invading Earth, he ends up on your team, along with his sidekicks Thursday the fat robot and busty vixen Jennifer.

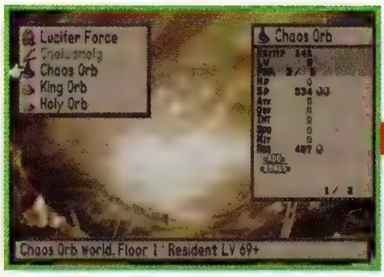


Freak four... The Prinnies
Servants to Etna, imagine plump, squeaky-voiced penguins that, um, explodes when thrown. They end most sentences with "Dood!"

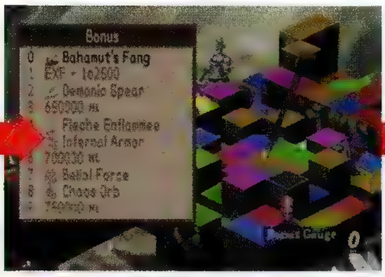


Freak five... Mid-Boss
Mid-Boss is a demon overlord wannabe who gets trounced over and over by Laharl, hence the nickname. Comes up with ludicrous excuses upon defeat.

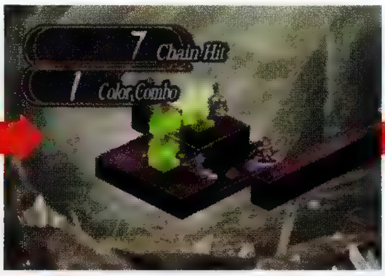
INTRICATE An introduction to the Item World



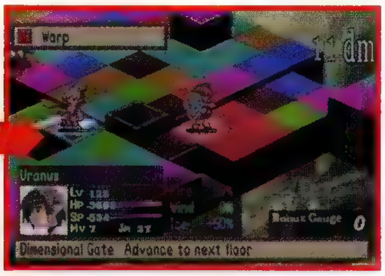
Deep inside Every item or piece of equipment in *Disgaea* can be 'travelled' into, via the Item World. These randomly-generated dungeons are where dedicated players will spend a lot of hours.



Bob a job As you travel down into an item, you'll level it up, as well as reap some great bonuses én route. You can even capture 'job' specialists that will add bonus stats to the item in question.

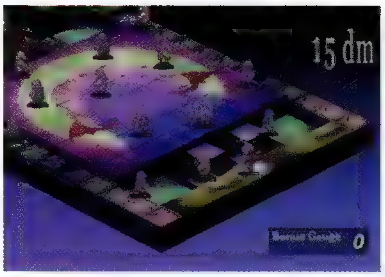


Geo-wulf Item Dungeons are usually covered in bizarre Geo Panel effects, which you can put to good use – detonate them in sequence using Geo Stones, and your bonus bar will explode.



Way out Make sure you enter an Item World with a Mr Gency's Exit in your possession – it lets you leave the dungeon whenever you want. If not, you'll only be able to leave at every tenth stage.

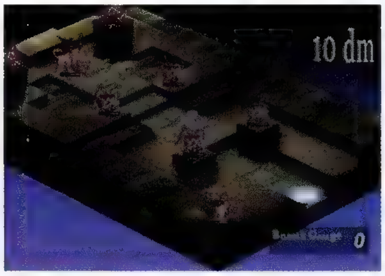
TRICKY Hidden stages to find



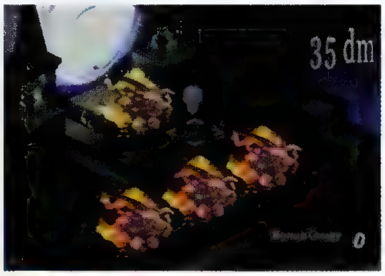
Prinny Land Get the Dark Assembly to pass the bill for Prinny Land. Beating it will unlock bonus Prinny character classes for you to create, including Captain Prinny and Prinny God.

Yeas 0
Nays 1439
Nay!
Alternate Netherworld

Alt. Netherworld You'll need to petition the Dark Assembly to open this stage, but conquering it will give you access to hidden character Prier, a powerful lady with some nifty new skills.



Cave Of Ordeals Petition the Dark Assembly to open it up. The caves contain many high-powered enemies that let you 'power-level' and bless your characters with oodles of experience.



Baal's Tower You'll need to unlock all aforementioned stages (plus Beauty Castle) to open this. Here you fight Prinny Baal – level 6000, with several million HP – the strongest foe in *Disgaea*.

ALAKAZAM How to unlock the hidden mages

To begin with, you'll have access to just three types of mages – fire, ice and wind. They pack some great attacks, but they can do more than just hurl the elements around.

TOTAL DAMAGE 0

Step 1... Star Mages
Develop a fire, ice and wind mage up to level 5, and you'll unlock the Star Mage, a new class of spell that's immune to your target's elemental attributes.

TOTAL DAMAGE 0

Step 2... Prism Mages
Develop a Star Mage to level 35, and you'll unlock the Prism Mage class. These humdingers can cast fire, wind and ice spells in one handy package.

TOTAL DAMAGE 0

Step 3... Galaxy Mages
Develop a Prism Mage to level 50 to get your hands on the Galaxy Mages. These ultimate magicians can cast fire, ice, wind *and* star spells.

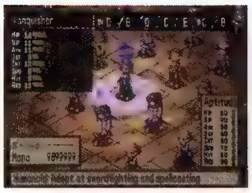
TOTAL DAMAGE 0

Step 4... Take everything even further
It's possible to 'transmigrate' fire/ice/wind mages into Galaxy Mages, blessing them with the über-powerful 'Tera' spells.

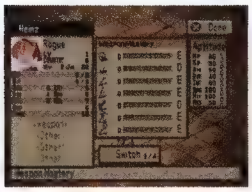
TOTAL DAMAGE 0

Step 5... Reap the whirlwind
Mages become hugely powerful, able to attack specific weaknesses of baddies at a distance. Who needs archers?

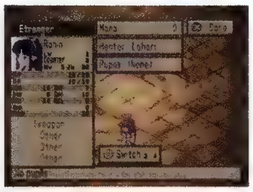
USEFUL How to unlock hidden character classes



It's worth paying regular visits to *Disgaea*'s Dark Assembly, which, among other things, lets you make new characters. You'll often unlock new classes without realising, so return often.

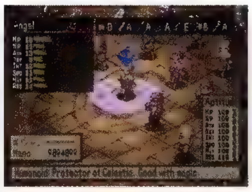


Class 1... Rogue
To unlock, get both a Warrior & Fighter to level 5. Rogues can steal, an essential skill for pilfering tasty items from some of the tougher enemies you face.

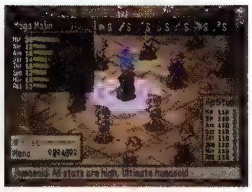


Class 2... Ronin
Develop a female Warrior & Fighter to level 10. Ronin characters are simply very strong indeed, and have maximum skill with swords.

Class 3... Scout
Get two Warriors/Fighters to level 5. Scouts can cover tons of ground, and can use the brilliant Geo Change and Dark Cannon skills.



Class 4... Angel
You'll need a Knight, Archer and Female Cleric at level 100. The payoff? Angels are decent with many types of magic, but aren't ultra-wimps as well.



Class 5... Maijin
Get a male Warrior, Brawler, Ninja, Rogue and Scout to level 200 – phew. Maijins are incredible – heavyweight brutalists that are skilled with all weapon types.

ON THE DISC
We reviewed *Juiced 2* on last month's disc

PLAYSTATION SECRETS

Neverending drifts around Juiced 2's skid-tastic tracks

Tower de France
Forget about the hot-rod glitz and hip-hop glam of tuner culture. If you can see past *Juiced 2*'s cheesy bling, then you'll witness a driving game with an arcade heart, one with the kind of cajones to make many old-school Sega fans proud. Such an excess of drift-happy skidding would be worthless, mind, if the game didn't have the tracks to support it, so *Juiced 2* has invented a handful of lovably over-the-top courses that positively encourage you to enter a satisfying, slide-happy trance. One such doozy is the 'French Revolution', four interconnected loops that snake between the feet of the Eiffel Tower. And, once you've learned how to get your drift on, it's possible to perform entire laps with your car set at a lunatic angle. Addictive? Hell, yeah.

> "Race entire laps at a lunatic angle"

1 The technique

Skid row Here's how to drift – ease off the gas, throw yourself sharply into a turn, then step on the accelerator to let your car's rear end peel out. Then it's a case of feathering the accelerator and holding a deep enough angle to coast round the corner.

2 The application

11,718
Bobby Leon

Squeal piggies Career mode has enough drift events for it to be a significant part of your rise to fame. Seven other racers will join you, each aiming for the highest drift score (changing directions adds to your multiplier). There are also drift elimination events.

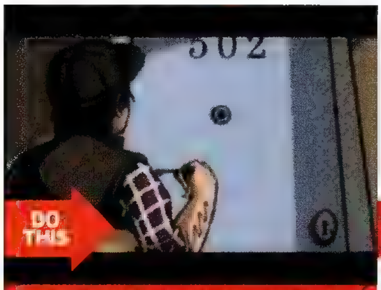
3 The overkill

7,300
Tamara

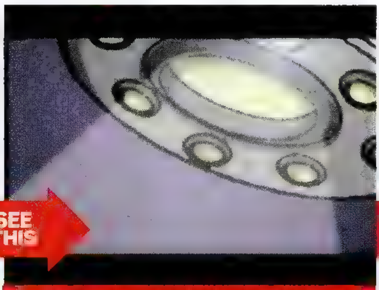
Twist and shout There's even a track, called the 'Immortal Coil', which is nothing but a giant concrete corkscrew. If you lose your drift on the descent it's a bugger to get it back, but nailing the whole thing in one, smooth, tyre-ruining run? It's a delight.

PlayStation's best kept secrets uncovered every month

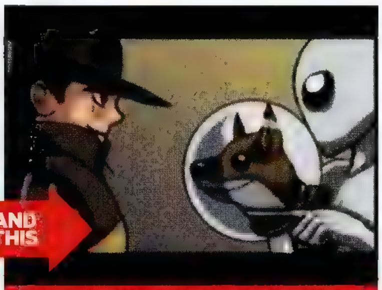
Secret ending › Silent Hill Origins › Alien/dog insanity



Near the end of SHO, use the Room you key in – obviously – Room 502 of the motel.

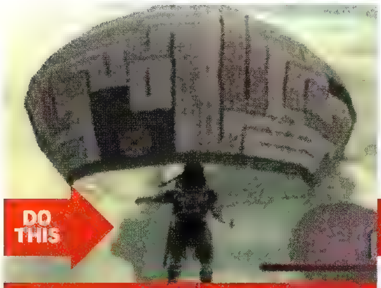


You'll get an animated UFO ending. All *Silent Hills* have one, but this is the oddest yet.

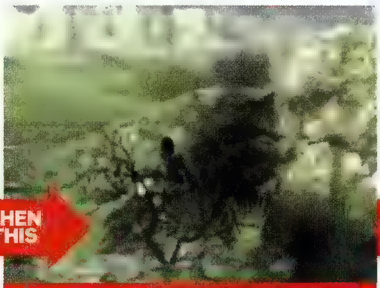


The alien (and his dog) say your lost truck is on their planet. And off you all go to get it. *What?*

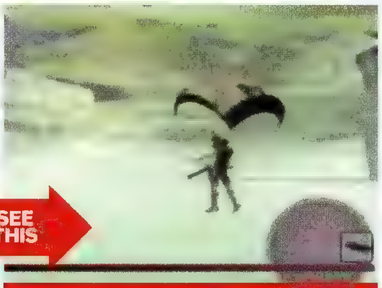
Glitch exploitation › Shadow Of The Colossus › Beneath the game world



First, you'll need a parachute. Get this by beating 14 colossi in Time Attack mode.

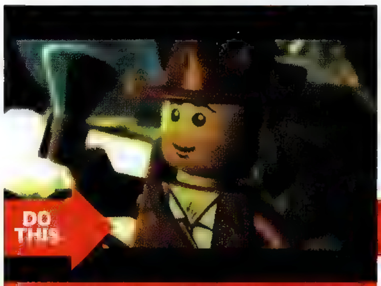


Head here – square E7 on the map. Stand where the two rocks join and open your chute.

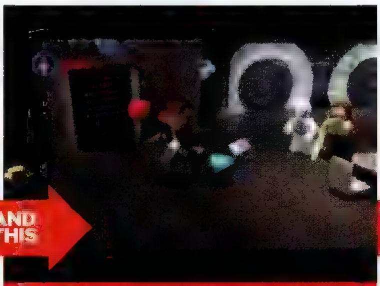


You'll fall *through* the map, and the world will be floating above your head. All very weird.

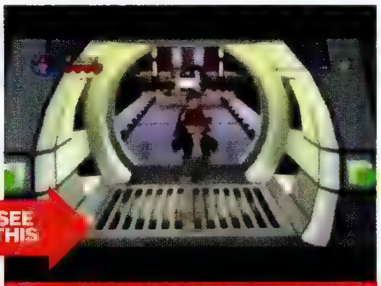
Secret character › LSW: Complete Saga › Play *Lego Indiana Jones* early – kind of



Go to the bonus room in the Cantina and watch the *Lego Indiana Jones* trailer.



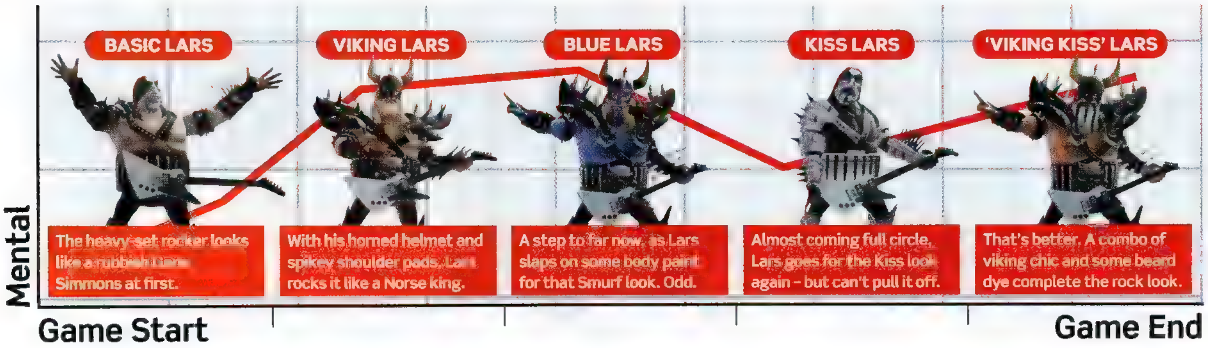
Indy will then be available to buy in the shop – for $50,000 – as a playable character.



[illegible] Darth Vader with Indy himself. Or flog Jar Jar into pieces.

From zero to hero in... Guitar Hero 3

Lars Ümlaüt has the axe skills, yet his outfits are anything but cutting edge...



The heavy-set rocker looks like a rubbish Gene Simmons at first.

With his horned helmet and spikey shoulder pads, Lars rocks it like a Norse king.

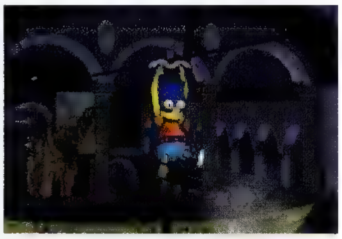
A step to far now, as Lars slaps on some body paint for that Smurf look. Odd.

Almost coming full circle, Lars goes for the Kiss look again – but can't pull it off.

That's better. A combo of viking chic and some beard dye complete the rock look.

The Top 5

Cheats you *must* know



① The Simpsons Game
Unlock Bart's costumes and trophies

At the main menu, press →, ←, ▢(2), △, R3 to unlock all of Bart's costumes and trophies.

② TimeShift
Play as Dr Aiden Krone

Enter the options menu, select Multi-player, then Model, then press ← to highlight Dr. Aiden Krone. Press △, then enter 'RXYMCPENCJ' to unlock the Dr Aiden Krone skin for multi-player mode.

③ Tony Hawk's Proving Ground
Unlock all Fun Items

Enter 'OVERTHETOP' as a code to unlock all *Proving Ground*'s Fun Items.

④ WWE Smackdown Vs Raw 2008
Triple H and HBK's DX attire

Enter the word 'DXCostume69K2' as a code to unlock Triple H and HBK's DX team outfits.

⑤ Crash Of The Titans
Invisible Crash

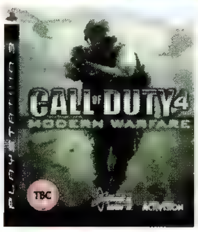
Pause the game, then hold R1 and press △, ▢, △, ▢. Keep R1 held until the game is resumed. Repeat the code to disable its effect.

ON THE DISC
We've got our review of CoD4 on this disc
PS3/Reviews

PLAYSTATION ONLINE

Treasure the horror of war in Call Of Duty 4 online

Nathan Irvine



Pub Activision
Dev Infinity Ward
FYI PS3 | 2007 | PSM95 94%
After the so-so WW2 rehashing of *Call Of Duty 3* the series comes full circle with a modern day setting. Playing as both the SAS and the US Marines you'll blast through numerous epic set-pieces that punctuate PS3's most thrilling FPS to date. Not to be missed

"50,000 people used to live here... now it's a ghost town." If these words (from *CoD4*'s intro movie) aren't burned into your mind, they soon will be - as you boot up for yet *another* cruelly addictive online session. It's not much fun at first, mind - staring at your meagre arsenal, while highly-ranked veterans plough through the opposition with powerful guns you've never even seen, let alone held - their reward for *days* of online kills. But a few hours in, you'll adjust to the sharp learning curve and learn to embrace PS3's finest online game yet.

From your very first breathtaking battle, the action never lets up - and thanks to an OCD-inducing levelling-up system you'll be soaking up the killing for months to come. In no time, you'll be writing people off before they've fired a shot. Rank 5? Total newbie - only just unlocked perks. Rank 46? Shit, they've unlocked the M14 and Overkill perk.

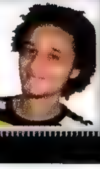
Are you experienced?

After every match, you earn EXP (read 'Experience Points'). These range from +5 for capping an enemy in Deathmatches to +200 for defusing a bomb in Search & Destroy. Accrue enough points to take your military rank (Lieutenant, General that sort of thing) to the next level and a cheesy, yet exciting, guitar riff will play as a message flashes across the screen to confirm your step up, and unlock some handy resources (see A Different Class).

One of the only problems we've found is that the PS3 servers are sometimes slow to throw you into the mix. But Infinity Ward are working to get this sorted, they tell us, and hopefully will have already done so by the time you're read this.

There are many reasons why *Call Of Duty 4* works so well (one standout is earning AI-controlled gunships and airstrikes after multiple killing streaks) but it's unfair to single out just one. But with new features, weapons and modes being unlocked at every step of the way, this is one online FPS you won't mind going over the top for. Brilliant.

ONLINE VERDICT

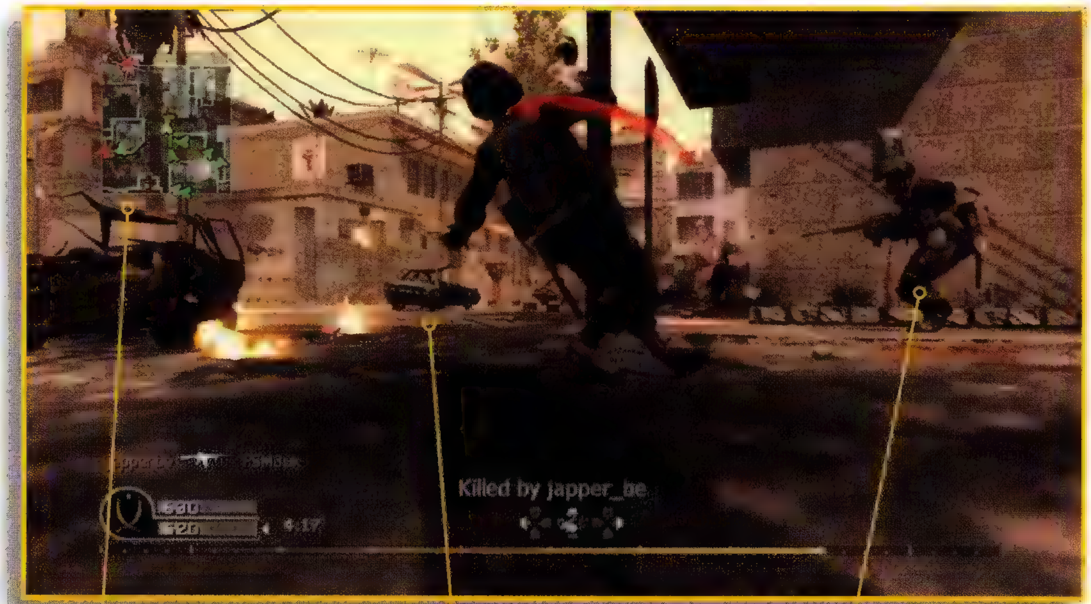


Lots of players? Absolutely. The world and his dog are currently warring online.
Buy it just for online? Yup - it's like having a whole other game for free

"This is the first *CoD* not to be set during World War 2"

GAMEPLAY Defining moment

There's so much eye-distracting detail while playing *CoD4* online that every blink makes you miss something beautiful. But so long as you keep your eyes open long enough to see your enemies moving, you'll be OK.



Radar love
Forget your gun, this is your biggest ally. Your enemies will be invisible unless a) you unlock the radar after a three-kill spree or b) they fire an unsilenced weapon and give their position away.

Carnage
Looking for cover under heavy fire? Then wrecked cars are a great shield, but be careful not to stand by vehicles being peppered with bullets because your cover will be blown – literally – and you'll be dead.

Kill zone
Keep your eyes peeled as there's an enemy around every corner. You'll need to have your wits about you while running around because you'll be attacked at all angles. Take care.

MIX IT UP A different class

After achieving a Level 4 ranking you'll unlock the ability to customise your own class. This means you'll be able to tweak your arsenal, decide which perks to take into battle and ultimately set your stall out in the exact way you want to. Here's how...

1 Upgrade your weapons

There's a bunch of basic guns, but the more you play *CoD4* online the more bits and pieces you'll unlock for them. You can change the colour of your weapons, so if you're heading into a beige warzone the desert camouflage will ensure your killing machine doesn't stand out. Then there are the different sights you can attach. The standard targeting reticule is a bit naff, but strapping, say, a red-dot sight on it for precise aiming will ensure your bullets find their fleshy home easily.

2 Pick your perks

Perks are special features that you can take into the killing fields to give you an edge in combat. These range from straightforward options like Stopping Power, which slightly increases your weapon's power allowing you to take the enemy out quicker, to cheeky Last Stands when if you get shot you lie prone but can return fire with a handgun for your last dying seconds. Nice. They really help prolong your battles, especially Juggernaut, which allows you to take more fire than usual.

3 Naming

All that's left to do now is name and save your class. It's all very simple to knock up a quick fix and enter a clever class name like 'General Chaos' or something equally as witty, but as you can save a few creations it might be worth spending the time devising some specific combinations to call upon during battle. For example, kitting yourself out with a desert camo gun, a silencer and a stopping power perk will blend you into the beige levels like a deadly chameleon. Nice.

TIPS Three steps to guaranteed victory

A moving target is difficult to hit. Use L3 to sprint through open areas, and ⊗ to jump and confuse tracking marksmen.

Pick your shots. There's no point spraying bullets if you're not certain of a kill because you'll give your position away on the radar.

There's no shame in camping. Find a spot with one entrance/exit, lay a claymore to prevent an enemy sneaking up and you're safe to hunt.

Online Highlights

War report

1 [illegible]

2 [illegible]

3 [illegible]

4 [illegible]

5 [illegible]

Harshest insult

[illegible]

"I stabbed you in the ass, you d**k"

[illegible]

Community service

[illegible]

[illegible]

Leaderboard

The most decorated virtual soldier in *Call Of Duty 4*'s battlefields is Il5FUlI-XeX. His/her name may sound like a model of PC motherboard, but over four days he/her has chalked up 413,128 points which is a massive 40,000 more than the nearest rival.

ON THE DISC
[illegible] Midway action in
[illegible]

PLAYSTATION CLASSIC

Why the brain is mightier than the bullet in Psi-Ops

Dave Meikleham

PlayStation 2
Psi-Ops
The Mindgate Conspiracy
18+
MIDWAY

Pub Midway Games
Dev Midway Games
FYI PS2 | 2004 | PSM52 86%
Use psychic powers to fight your enemies in one of PS2's most overlooked gems

Slowly you sneak up behind the unsuspecting 'meat puppet' – *Psi-Ops*' lingo for its brainwashed soldiers. Gun cocked, brow furrowed and aim steady, you prepare to deliver the killer blow. But this is no ordinary shooter. Instead of pulling the trigger, Nick Scryer – the game's protagonist, best described as John McClane meets Uri Geller – focuses his mind and lifts his enemy into the air with nothing but the power of his thoughts. As Nick continues to Mind Drain his quarry the pressure gradually builds up in the soldier's cranium... and the puppet's head gushes open like a ripe, juicy watermelon, painting the walls with blood. A shooter where you can literally use your brains instead of bullets? Now that *is* refreshing.

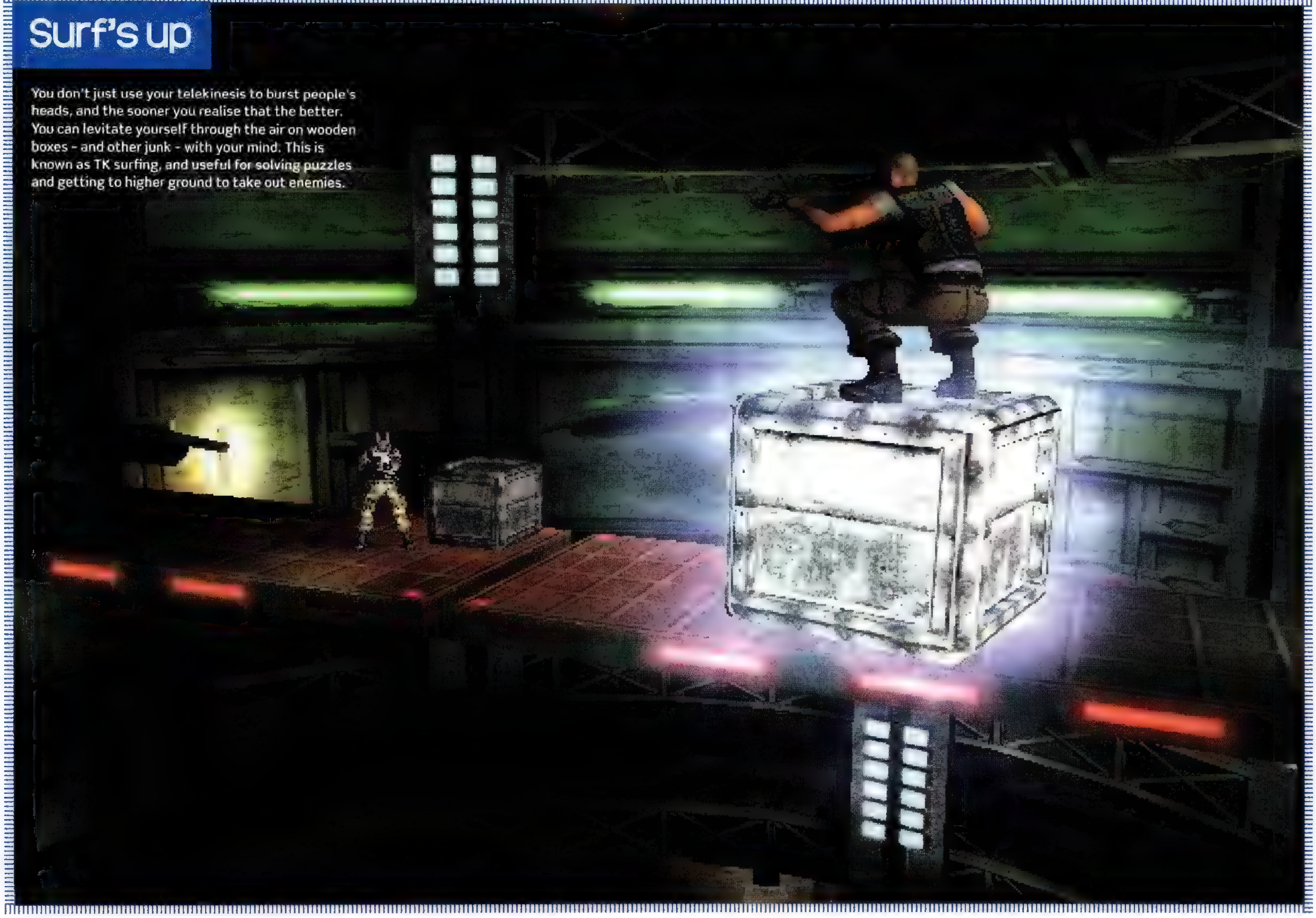
All in the mind

Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy really struck a chord with us when it was first released. Taking the robust stealth mechanics of *Metal Gear* and coupling it with the best use of psychic powers since the PC *Jedi Knight* games, it combined a genuinely innovative concept with PS2's most impressive physics and mixed it all into a moody, gripping action title. It really should have stood out in a market cluttered with 'me too' shooters. Unfortunately, an equally innovative, moody game with almost exactly the same concept was released within the next fortnight. That game was Free Radical Design's *Second Sight*, and, after a stream of critical acclaim, it's the psychic game that more gamers tend to remember today.

EMAIL PSM3 @
What do you think of *Psi-Ops*? Let us know:
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

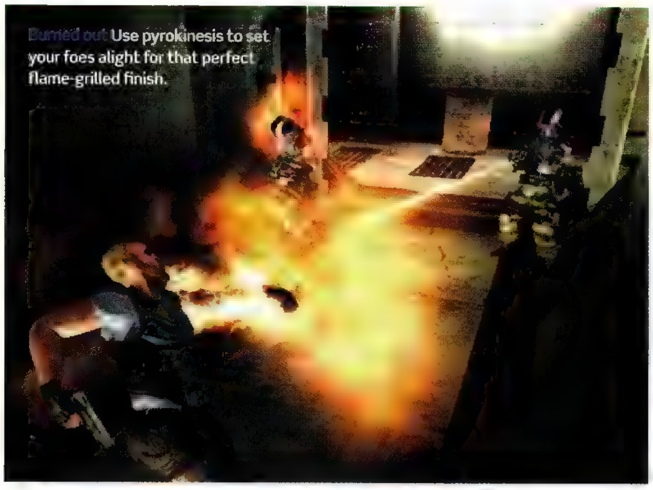
After a dull opening set in a military base with a monosyllabic colour pallet and an over-reliance on the clunky shooting mechanics, you'd be forgiven for forgetting *Psi-Ops* too. Persist, though, and you'll find a game which blossoms. While *Second Sight* had a more emotive main character, an infinitely superior plot and more imaginative level design, it's Midway's game that really nailed the most important part – psi powers. These included tossing your enemies into explosives canisters with

The defining moment...



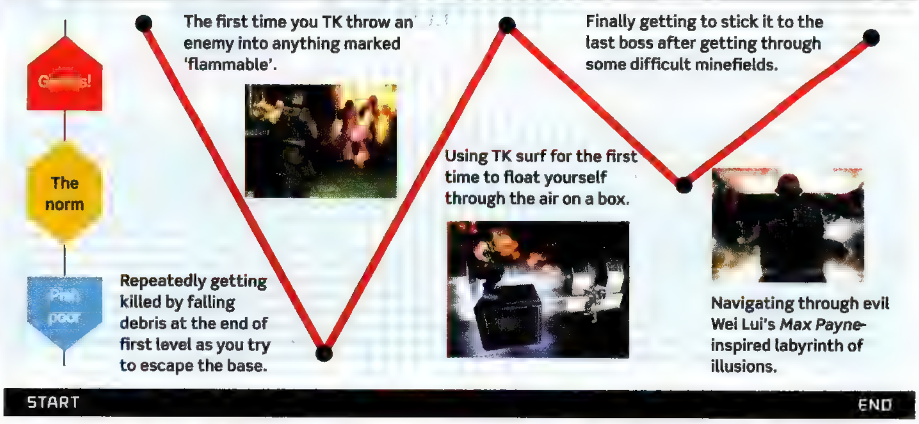
Surf's up

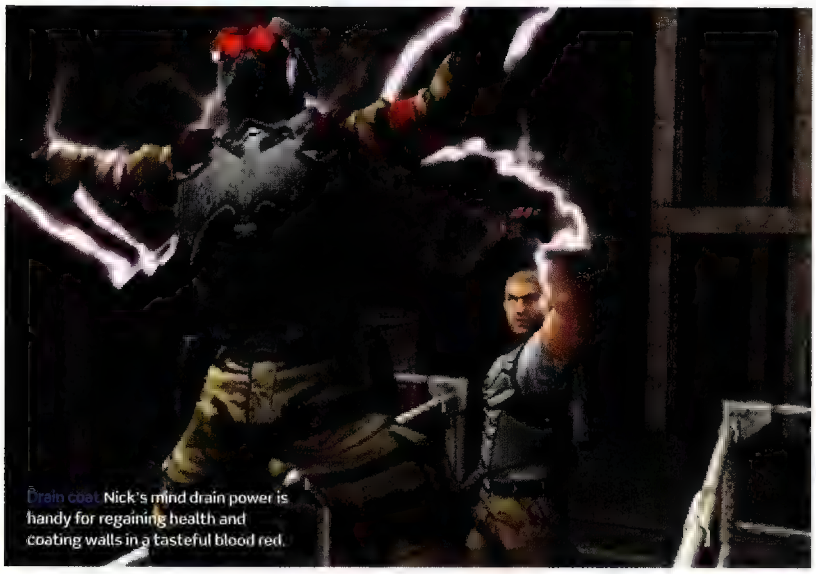
You don't just use your telekinesis to burst people's heads, and the sooner you realise that the better. You can levitate yourself through the air on wooden boxes – and other junk – with your mind. This is known as TK surfing, and useful for solving puzzles and getting to higher ground to take out enemies.



Burned out Use pyrokinesis to set your foes alight for that perfect flame-grilled finish.

The *Psi-Ops* thrill-o-graph



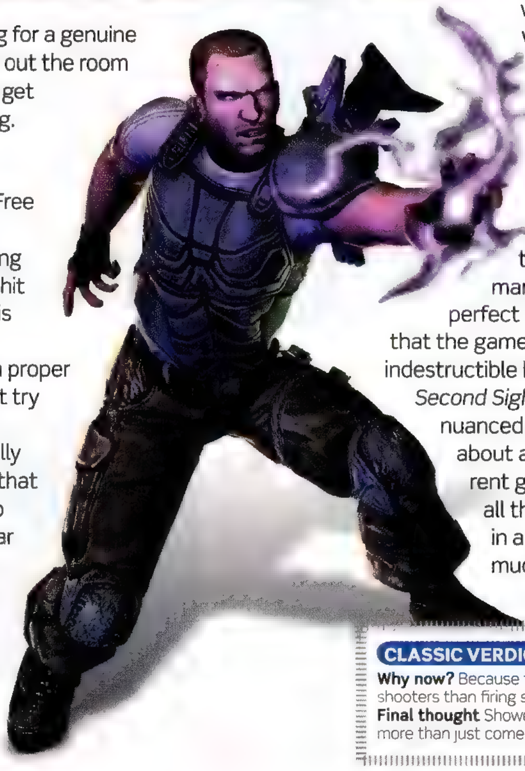


Drain coat Nick's mind drain power is handy for regaining health and coating walls in a tasteful blood red.

telekinesis, using remote viewing for a genuine out of body experience to scope out the room ahead and using mind control to get enemies to carry out your bidding.

Total havok

It's all about the physics. Unlike Free Radical's title, where brushing against a chair would send it flying across the room like it had been hit by a freight train, *Psi-Ops'* world is governed by the Havok physics engine, which lends everything a proper sense of motion and weight. Just try throwing a boulder compared to levitating a man and you can really feel the difference. It also helps that levels have been built to cater to your abilities. You'll never stray far from objects in the environment that can be used in conjunction with your powers to some deadly effect. From throwing enemies into electrified floors, floating them into open furnaces for an impromptu barbecue or controlling your enemies to walk into conveyor belts to create a mushy man mince. Every stage is a playground of death, creating a tight bond between player and environment.



Psi of the beholder

See, because *Psi-Ops'* world is so interactive – thanks to your abilities – it makes you feel a connection with your surroundings to the point where the environment itself becomes an extension of your character. This is what the game has passed on to PS3 titles such as *Stranglehold*, which show that interactive levels can be just as deadly and engaging as any Uzi, rocket launcher or grenade. And that's what keeps *Psi-Ops* valid in a market now dominated by pixel perfect PS3 worlds. Of course, the fact that the game makes you feel like the most indestructible killing-machine helps.

Second Sight may be the more considered, nuanced title, a thoughtful art-house piece about a tortured amnesiac to *Psi-Ops'* low rent gore-fest, with a lead character with all the sensitivity of Freddy Krueger. But in a world where popping skulls is this much fun, who needs nuance?

CLASSIC VERDICT

Why now? Because there's more to third-person shooters than firing sub-machine guns.

Final thought Showed ragdoll psychics can provide more than just comedy deaths. Plus, it's *brutal*.

The Top 5

Psi-Ops Facts

① Gnome grown There are quite a few evil garden gnomes scattered around the game's levels. Find one of these little lawn dwellers and you'll unlock bonus missions.

② Name game In Japan, it was called *Psi-Ops: Psychic Operation*.

③ Not so movie magic The producers of the shoddy Spy Hunter film picked up the rights to make a *Psi-Ops* flick. But poor sales have scuppered any chance of that.

④ Cold sore The band Cold – a Florida based post-grunge/alternative metal band – wrote the game's soundtrack. And even went on a short tour with the game's wince-inducing title track With My Mind.

⑤ The Uri's out Nick Scryer was originally going to be called Geller. A probable nod to everyone's least favourite spoon bender, we guess.

ON THE DISC
Check out the PS3 reviews section for the latest games

PS3 Top Ten

TOP TWO

① CALL OF DUTY 4: MODERN WARFARE

Pub Activision | **Dev** Infinity Ward | **Web** callofduty.com

"An invigorating, chaotic thrill that will leave such a dramatic footprint, all FPS's to follow will have to work extremely hard."

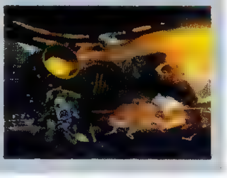
PSM3 Rating 94%

② RATCHET AND CLANK: TOD

Pub Sony | **Dev** Insomniac | **Web** insomniacgames.com

"Intense, beautiful and accessible. A return to the series' roots and a stellar game indeed. Welcome back, Ratchet."

PSM3 Rating 93%



THREE TO FIVE

③ ELDER SCROLLS 4: OBLIVION

Pub Ubisoft | **Dev** Bethesda
Web elderscrolls.com

"An RPG offering an experience that no other PS3 title can lay claim to. It's not perfect, but feels close enough."

PSM3 Rating 93%

④ SKATE

Pub EA | **Dev** EA Black Box | **Web** ea.com/skate

"The ultimate toy set to flex your imagination. A skater's skate game that *anyone* can enjoy, with near-perfect controls."

PSM3 Rating 91%

⑤ WARHAWK

Pub Sony | **Dev** Incognito | **Web** us.playstation.com/warhawk

"A masterpiece of balance and design. The jewel in Sony's online crown – the perfect Network showcase."

PSM3 Rating 90%

SIX TO EIGHT

⑥ GUITAR HERO 3

Pub Activision | **Dev** Neversoft
Web guitarhero.com

"Nothing tops the feeling of switching off your brain and letting your fingers fly over the fretboard."

PSM3 Rating 90%

⑦ RESISTANCE: FALL OF MAN

Pub Sony | **Dev** Insomniac
Web us.playstation.com

"An incredibly slick, exciting PS3 showcase. A beautiful vision of an alien-infested Britain. Terrific stuff."

PSM3 Rating 89%

⑧ MOTORSTORM

Pub Sony | **Dev** Evolution
Web motorstorm.com

"Tough, dynamic racing. A blistering thrill ride that makes good on all of PlayStation 3's promises."

PSM3 Rating 88%

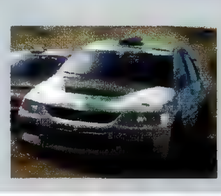
NINE TO TEN

⑨ COLIN MCRAE: DIRT

Pub Codemasters | **Dev** Codemasters
Web codemasters.com/dirt

"Has improvements over the Xbox 360 game, and as a single player experience, *DiRT* is nothing short of brilliant."

PSM3 Rating 88%

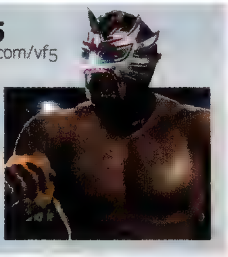


⑩ VIRTUA FIGHTER 5

Pub Sega | **Dev** AM2 | **Web** sega.com/vf5

"Perhaps the best scrapper ever, but *Virtua Fighter 5* is such an acquired taste. Still, technically flawless."

PSM3 Rating 87%



PSM3'S MOST WANTED

THE CLUB

Pub Sega **Dev** Bizarre Creations
Web bizarrecreations.com

Hands-on play suggests *The Club* might be better than we thought it would be...

AVOID

MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM: TARGET IN SIGHT

"This is one of the worst games we've played for ages. A disgrace on pretty much every level."

PSM3 Rating 28%

FULL AUTO 2: BATTLELINES

"A budget PlayStation 2 game wearing its big sister's high-definition make-up. Stick to *Burnout*."

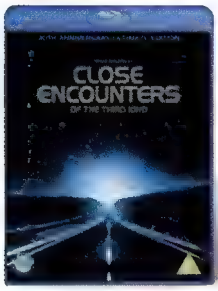
PSM3 Rating 36%

FANTASTIC FOUR: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER

"Dull, uninspired and a complete waste of PS3's power. Fantastic? They're not even adequate."

PSM3 Rating 39%

Out now on Blu-ray Movies for your PS3



SCARY

Close Encounters Of The Third Kind

Stars Richard Dreyfuss, Teri Garr
Web sonypictures.com

This is, in fact, the 30th Anniversary Edition of Close Encounters, which means as well as the classic sci-fi flick, you get loads of extras, including an interview with Spielberg and a 90-minute Making Of documentary. Smart.

D'OH

The Simpsons Movie

Stars Dan Castellaneta
Web simpsonsmovie.com

Oddly, we're even more excited about this than we were the original movie release – and like Close Encounters it makes good use of Blu-ray's storage capacity. Extras include two commentaries, three features, deleted scenes and quite a bit more besides. Ace.

MUTANTS

Hills Have Eyes 2

Stars Jessica Stroup, Jacob Vargas
Web foxsearchlight.com

Even more extra content 'thrills'. Four featurettes, a Wes Craven doc – this film is written by him – deleted scenes and loads more. The film itself centres round a load of guards battling mutant cannibals in the desert. It's a *little* bit on the pump side, but still...

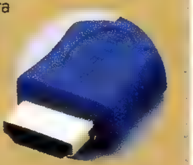
@ **Disagree with our scores?** Mail your angry rants or alternative scores and Top Tens to: psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "PS3 Top Ten"

Back Issues
Complete your collection!
Ring our hotline on 0870 837 4773

PS3 For Beginners

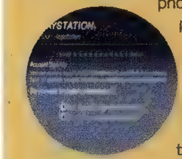
New to PS3? Read this now

Composite? SCART? HDMI? I'm confused... do I need an expensive TV?
Yes. Anyone running PS3 through a standard def (i.e. old) TV is missing out on just how good games can look. You need a good 16:9 (i.e. widescreen) TV with an HDMI input. That's better than any kind of composite and SCART connection. If it's running at least 1080i/720p, that means that the TV is officially 'hi-def'. PS3 *can* output up to 1080p resolution (i.e. show even more pixels), so you could shell out the extra for a TV that can handle it, but only a few games use 1080p and you can't see the difference unless you set two TVs side by side.



Why is Blu-ray so good?
Blu-ray is the best reason to spring for that 1080p set. All Blu-ray movies play at 1080p – the highest resolution you can get. Do you *need* Blu-ray? That's debatable now that PS3 can 'upscale' (i.e. run at hi-res) your old DVDs. Many 'old' DVDs that were well recorded look superb on PS3, meaning that re-buying your old movies on Blu-ray is a massive waste of cash. Still, in side-by-side comparisons Blu-ray does look sharper than DVD.

How do I connect to the net?
Simply select 'yes' to everything in your Internet Connection (under 'Settings') and PS3 should find the net and be up and running. Any problems, just phone your internet service provider and tell them you've got a PS3 – you'll need to know the primary and secondary DNS numbers they use. Choose 'Manual' rather than 'Auto' and tap these into the settings.



How do I add Friends?
Like any good party, the trick is being invited. Your PS Network ID is the key here. Tell this to a friend and they can send you a Friend Request message from their PS3. The friend request will then appear on your PS3. Simply say 'Yes' and both of you will have icons for each other on your machines. Now sending a message is just a click away, as is the ability to see when their PS3 is switched on and what they're playing.

How do I download stuff from the store?
The PS Store is in your PS3's Network menu. Select this for many free and reasonably priced downloads. We find the best way to keep abreast of what's hot is to check the 'Recent Additions' and 'Top Downloads' charts on the right of the front page. Simply click on the start the download. Then choose 'Perform In Background' to do other things on your PS3 while they download. Sadly you can't yet play movies or games while downloading, but you can still surf the net without pausing the process.

How do I play music and video on my PS3?
All music and video appears on the Music and Video menus. Simple. Insert a CD and you can rip it to your hard drive from the Music menu. Video is slightly tougher. No, you can't rip DVDs or Blu-rays. Movies have to be in the right (MP4) format to play. These are easily available from the PS Store, or insert PSM3's disc and press ⓐ to see the contents and be given an option to copy them to your hard drive.

High Definition TVs

Revealed: the best TVs for PS3 gaming – to suit any budget

£400 - £700

Sony KDL-20S3020

A touch over 400 quid (£445, to be exact) is a very fair price indeed for a more than decent 20-inch telly. It might not be the biggest, but it packs a punch technically, and even features that all-important HDMI socket.
Also recommended: 32" Evesham ALQEMI 32SX, £600), 20" Philips 20PF5320D (£500).

£700 - £1000

JVC LT-32DA8BJ

An excellent-value mid-range TV, this. Integrated TV receiver, HDMI ports, two SCART sockets and 3D cinema sound all contribute to making this a box you can be proud of having in the corner of your living room. £700 for a 32-inch TV can't be bad. And it'll be cheaper online.
Also recommended: 32" Sony KDL-32V2500 £850), 26" Toshiba 26WLT66 (£700).

£1000 - £2000

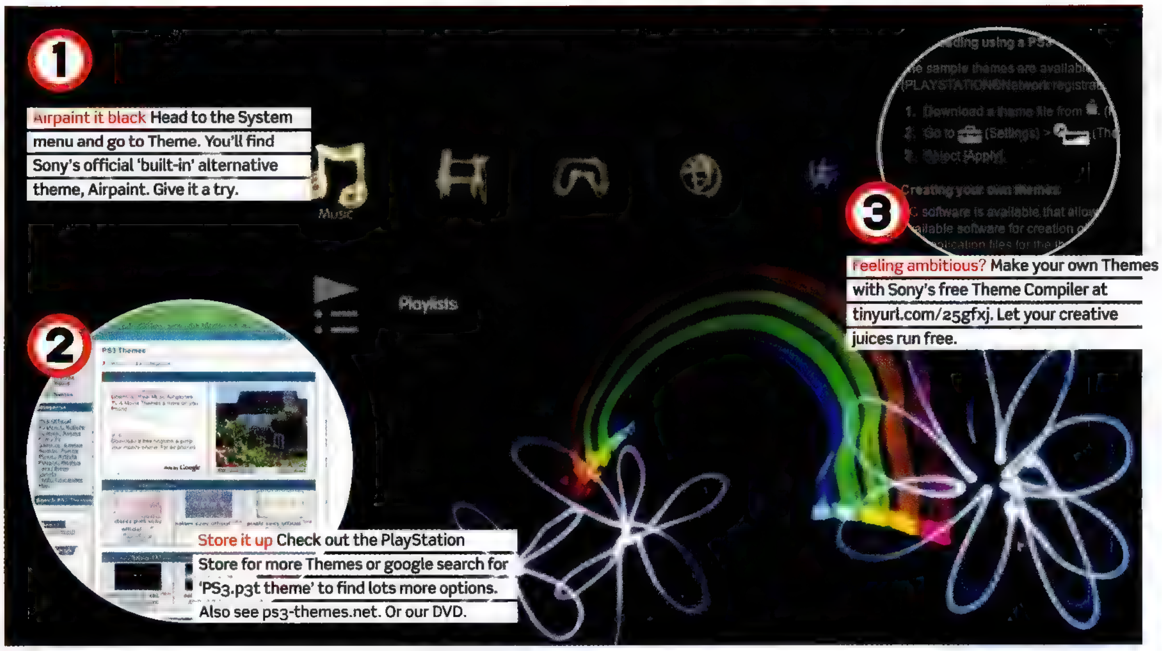
Philips 32PFL9632D

A £1,000 beauty. 32 inches and full-on 1080p-o-vision, three HDMI ports and even a USB socket make this one of the most desirable large-ish LCDs on the market at the moment. Philips' own Perfect Pixel display at its finest.
Also recommended: 42" Sharp Aquos (£1,900), 47" Toshiba 47WLT66 (£1,900).

Tech-tips Send us your tech questions and tips. Email: psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "Tech Tips"

XMB: PS3 Themes

This month: Customise your PS3 to perfection



① **Airpaint it black** Head to the System menu and go to Theme. You'll find Sony's official 'built-in' alternative theme, Airpaint. Give it a try.

② **Store it up** Check out the PlayStation Store for more Themes or google search for 'PS3.p3t theme' to find lots more options. Also see ps3-themes.net. Or our DVD.

③ **Feeling ambitious?** Make your own Themes with Sony's free Theme Compiler at tinyurl.com/25gfxj. Let your creative juices run free.

By now you should have version 2.0 of PS3's firmware. (Go to System, System Update.) This gives your PS3 a bunch of new features, not least of which are the new 'theme' options, where you can dress your PS3 menus.

There's only one theme inside the 2.0 update. Go to System, Theme, Airpaint. The Airpaint theme will then install, changing your desktop.

There are a growing number of themes available on the 'net. These take the form of .p3t files. (Try Googling 'PS3.p3t theme'.) There are official themes available on the Store and more can be found at www.ps3-themes.net. Or simply pop in Side B of this month's DVD for 130+ themes.

Download these files to your PC/Mac, then make a folder called PS3, then one inside called 'THEME'. Yes, the caps are important. Copy the .p3t files into 'THEME', copy it all onto a memory stick, and insert into your PS3. Select System>Themes for an Install option to copy the new themes from the stick to the HD.

And that's not all – you can make your own Themes using Sony's PC-only design software available for free download (tinyurl.com/25gfxj). Have fun – and email us your efforts.

ON THE DISC
Want to see the latest PS2 [illegible]

PS2 Playlist

FIRST CHOICE | SECOND CHOICE | THIRD CHOICE

STRATEGY/ MANAGEMENT

LMA MANAGER 2006

Pub Codemasters | **Dev** Codemasters | **Web** codemasters.co.uk

"If you fancy updating your team after the transfer window, *LMA* gives you an online option. A superb idea."

PSM3 Rating 85%

THE SIMS

Pub EA | **Dev** Maxis
Web thesims.ea.com

"Mum leaves clothes everywhere, soils herself, plays rap music and refuses to do any cleaning. Fun."

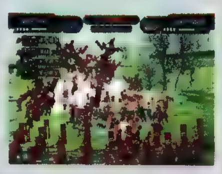
PSM3 Rating 85%

KESSEN III

Pub Koei | **Dev** Koei | **Web** koei.co.uk

"There's a real sense of scale and the battlefield feels alive with movement and mass conflict."

PSM3 Rating 82%



ALSO RECOMMENDED DYNASTY WARRIORS [illegible] 80% | ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS [illegible] 70% | [illegible] 80% | [illegible] 80% | [illegible] 80%

RETRO

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA ANTHOLOGY

Pub Capcom | **Dev** Capcom
Web capcom.com

"This is worth the asking price for *Street Fighter Alpha 3* and *Pocket Fighter* alone. Best *SF* experience on PS2."

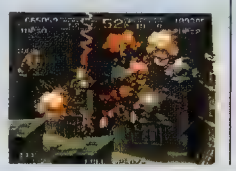
PSM3 Rating 80%

METAL SLUG ANTHOLOGY

Pub SNK | **Dev** SNK | **Web** snkplaymoreusa.com

"A 2D binge that packs in seven *Metal Slug* games. Ketchup-hued blood spurts everywhere. Repetitive, but tough."

PSM3 Rating 79%



ALIEN HOMINID

Pub Zoo Digital | **Dev** The Behemoth | **Web** alienhominid.com

"*Hominid* really makes you work. Every minute you stay alive is an achievement almost unparalleled."

PSM3 Rating 74%

ALSO RECOMMENDED KING OF FIGHTERS [illegible] 79% | CAPCOM VS SNK 2 [illegible] 83% | [illegible] 84% | [illegible] 84%

SPORTS

FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 2

Pub EA | **Dev** EA | **Web** easports.com

"We're treated to a host of (almost) living, breathing and bleeding boxers. Looks utterly superb as well."

PSM3 Rating 89%

VIRTUA TENNIS 2

Pub Acclaim | **Dev** Sega | **Web** sega.com

"Far from perfect, but combines utterly addictive arcade action with sim-like depth. Simply smashing."

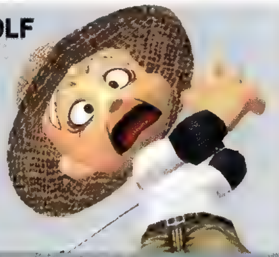
PSM3 Rating 88%

EVERYBODY'S GOLF

Pub SCEE | **Dev** Sony
Web playstation.com

"While never hugely difficult, it's all so warm and relaxing that it doesn't really matter much."

PSM3 Rating 87%



ALSO RECOMMENDED NBA STREET VOL 3 87% | TIGER WOODS 2006 78% | [illegible] 85% | [illegible] 79% | [illegible] 85% | [illegible] 80%

ADVENTURE

OKAMI

Pub Capcom | **Dev** Clover
Web capcom.com

"You're restoring nature and helping people. Why can't all PS2 games be this beautiful?"

PSM3 Rating 95%

ICO

Pub SCEI | **Dev** Team Ico **Web** icothegame.com

"The saddest, most tragic story on PS2, but also an achingly beautiful one. *Ico* teases out genuine emotion."

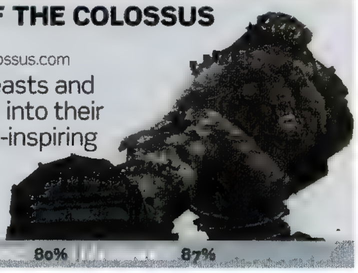
PSM3 Rating 93%

SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS

Pub SCEI | **Dev** SCEI
Web shadowofthecolossus.com

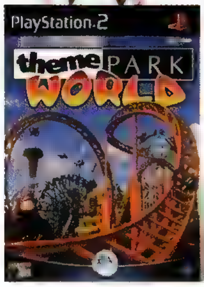
Climb 200ft beasts and plunge swords into their brains. An awe-inspiring experience."

PSM3 Rating 91%



ALSO RECOMMENDED [illegible] 80% | [illegible] 82% | [illegible] 80% | [illegible] 80% | [illegible] 87%

All the fun of the fair A fairground games round-up? Fair play...



FUNFAIR

Theme Park World

Pub EA | **Dev** Bullfrog
Web themeparkworld.com

Theme Park World was basically *Sim City*, but with slightly more of a focus on helter-skelters and vomiting kids. But it was massively in-depth as well, with loads of stats to ogle and sliders to toggle back and forth. Decent stuff.

PSM3 Rating 68%

PlayStation.2
THRILLVILLE

LESS FUN-FAIR

Thrillville

Pub Atari | **Dev** Frontier
Web thrillvillegame.com

Far less sim-minded than *Theme Park World*, *Thrillville* is basically a collection of fairground-themed minigames, including one tasking you to perform ridiculous stunts on a trampoline. Recent sequel *Off The Rails* added little to the mix.

PSM3 Rating 66%

PlayStation.2
RollerCoaster World

NO FUN-FAIR

Rollercoaster World

Pub Midas | **Dev** Takara
Web rollercoasterworld.com

On PC, there's a 'design your own car racecourse' game called *Trackmania*. This is like that, but with rollercoasters replacing Ferraris. Build your own 'coaster. Ride it. Go "Is that it?" Get bored. Make a cup of tea. Drink it. Sleep.

PSM3 Rating 50%

@ **Disagree with our choices?** Write us an explosive mail telling us why we're complete idiots. Lob your word bombs at: psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "WRONG!"

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Why didn't anyone buy...?

They released it... No-one bought it. We explain

PlayStation 2
SAMURAI WESTERN
M
ATLUS
WWW.ATLUS.COM

Samurai Western

Pub Atlus | **Dev** Spike | **Web** atlus.com

Take the not-very-popular *Way Of The Samurai* slashers-cum-RPGs published by Capcom, then take them *away* from Capcom and hand a spin-off to minor Japanese publisher Atlus. And then up the RPG content *even more*. And that, in a nutshell, is why no-one bought *Samurai Western*.

So imagine something like *Onimusha*, but in a Western setting where you, armed with only your swords, are battling a load of cowboys. Cowboys with guns. Seems a bit unfair, and at first it is – you'll have your arse kicked from pillar to post when you set out – until you begin your RPG-style levelling-up process. This you do by replaying stages you've already beaten – not something relished by a lot of action game fans – boosting your stats and becoming more powerful and more agile. Doing this even alters the appearance of your samurai, making him more muscular.

But let's go back to the 'disbalance' of 'swords vs guns' – as well as levelling up, you've one more ace in the hole, and it's one of the most ludicrously cool moves in gaming. A quick jab of R2, and you can *slice bullets out of the air.* It's the sort of thing that, when it happens in films, critics coo and gasp. When *Samurai Western* did it, everyone was too busy to notice. Bah.

Samurai Western's not perfect – there's slowdown, and the camera is on the ropey side. But it's a refreshingly skewed take on the slash-'em-up, and thoroughly worthy of investigation. So do it.

EMAIL PSM3 @
Want to champion a game here? Let us know.
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

PlayStation 3 Top 20

This month's big retail winners and losers

01	NEW	Call Of Duty 4	Activision **Reviewed PSM95** 94%	☐
02	NEW	WWE Smackdown Vs Raw 2008	THQ **Reviewed PSM94** 79%	☐
03	NEW	Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	Sony **Reviewed PSM93** 93%	☐
04	(04)	MotorStorm	Sony **Reviewed PSM86** 88%	☐
05	(01)	Resistance: Fall Of Man	Sony **Reviewed PSM86** 89%	☐
06	NEW	Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	Konami **Reviewed PSM93** 86%	☐
07	(02)	FIFA 08	EA **Reviewed PSM94** 63%	☐
08	(03)	Heavenly Sword	Sony **Reviewed PSM93** 65%	☐
09	RE	F1 Championship Edition	Sony **Reviewed PSM86** 50%	☐
10	NEW	The Simpsons Game	EA **Reviewed PSM95** 70%	☐
11	NEW	Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	Lucasarts **Reviewed PSM95** 80%	☐
12	(08)	Sega Rally	Sega **Reviewed PSM93** 79%	☐
13	NEW	Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	THQ **Reviewed PSM95** 80%	☐
14	(07)	Ridge Racer 7	Sony **Reviewed PSM86** 79%	☐
15	(09)	Tiger Woods 08	EA **Reviewed PSM93** 68%	☐
16	NEW	Jericho	Codemasters **Reviewed PSM94** 65%	☐
17	NEW	Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	Activision **Reviewed PSM84** 85%	☐
18	(06)	Skate	EA **Reviewed PSM93** 91%	☐
19	(10)	Colin McRae: DiRT	Codemasters **Reviewed PSM92** 88%	☐
20	NEW	The Eye Of Judgement	Sony **Reviewed PSM94** 79%	☐

Want it? Tick it!

Tour of duty

Straight in at number one for PS3's best game yet. Bought it and finished it? Check out our online review of the game over on page 96.

Just d'oh it

As expected, *The Simpsons Game* has done pretty good business. It's worth a punt for fans because it'll make you laugh until your nose bleeds profusely.

Judge not, lest ye be judged

It may be just Top Trumps with monsters and a whacking great camera, but the *Eye Of Judgement* has still gone down well. As it should, really.

$1,000,000

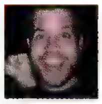
The money Take Two have set aside to refund customers 'offended' by *GTA*'s Hot Coffee mod.

You're playing...

Mel Magoo
This isn't Mel's real surname, but it's the one she uses. Hmm.

1 **Final Fantasy XII** "I've dedicated 200 hours to it and can't give it up."
2 **Final Fantasy VIII** "It has never had any remakes and is perfect the way it is."
3 **Kingdom Hearts 2** "Because it's Halloween as I type, and I'm trying to imitate Sora's HT wing pattern for a costume."

We're playing...



Richard Broughton
Would you trust a man who smiles like a maniac? Us neither.

1 **Call Of Duty 4** "An absolutely phenomenal game. Jammed full of awe-inspiring moments."
2 **Ratchet & Clank** "I love this game – if only I could get my girlfriend to stop hogging it."
3 **PES 2008** "Despite the rage-inducing flaws, I keep coming back for more."

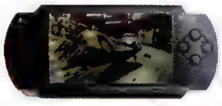
They're playing...

Alex McLean
The *Conflict* developer sneaks *four* games in here...

1 **God Of War 1+2** "Next-gen games on a PS2. Shouldn't be possible, but it is. Fantastic.
2 **Okami** "Genuinely original, genuinely innovative, beautiful and great to play."
3 **FFVII** "Years ago we were burgled at home – bizarrely, the greatest loss was the *FFVII* saved game."

ON THE DISC
See what PSP games are [illegible]

PSP Playlist



FIRST CHOICE | SECOND CHOICE | THIRD CHOICE

PLATFORMERS

RATCHET AND CLANK: SIZE MATTERS

Pub Sony | **Dev** High Impact | **Web** us.playstation.com

"Beautiful and frantic – an eye-to-brain feast that's luxuriously realised."

PSM3 Rating 86%

DAXTER

Pub SCEE | **Dev** Ready at Dawn
Web naughtydog.com

"Looks and plays so much like *Jak 2* that it's a bit unnerving. Go and get it."

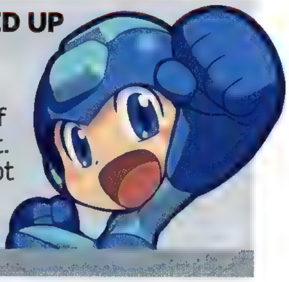
PSM3 Rating 86%

MEGAMAN POWERED UP

Pub Capcom | **Dev** Capcom
Web megaman.co.uk

"Monstrously hard and requires the dexterity of a cyborg concert pianist. Playable, though, but not for everyone."

PSM3 Rating 78%



ALSO RECOMMENDED [illegible] 69% | [illegible] 75% | [illegible] 71%

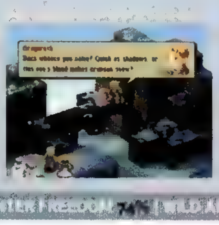
RPG / STRATEGY

FINAL FANTASY TACTICS

Pub Square Enix | **Dev** Square Enix
Web square-enix-usa.com

"Classic *FF*, but with addition of movement and character classes. Epic, tactical and polished stuff."

PSM3 Rating 89%

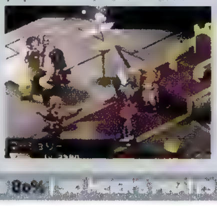


DISGAEA: AFTERNOON OF DARKNESS

Pub Koei | **Dev** Nippon Ichi | **Web** disgaeapsp.com

"On the surface it's simple, but this game is deeper than Richard Branson's pockets. Go and buy it."

PSM3 Rating 88%



MGS: PORTABLE OPS

Pub Konami | **Dev** Kojima Studios
Web konami.com

"A compromised imitation of a classic, but easily one of PSP's best single-player games yet."

PSM3 Rating 83%

ALSO RECOMMENDED MONSTER HUNTER FREEDOM 74% | WILD ARMS [illegible] 77% | LORD OF THE RINGS TACTICS 80% | SID MEIER'S PIRATES 80% | METAL GEAR ACID 80% | FIELD COMMANDER 82%

WI-FI

VIRTUA TENNIS WORLD TOUR

Pub Sega | **Dev** Sumo Digital
Web sega.com

"*Virtua Tennis* experts will demolish you with shots you wouldn't believe, leaving you swearing like McEnroe."

PSM3 Rating 91%

ROGER FEDERE
PRESS START

BURNOUT LEGENDS

Pub EA | **Dev** Team Fusion
Web ea.com

"If you want a fast, fun racer with great online play, then this is it. It's got loads to do."

PSM3 Rating 92%

SOCOM: FIRETEAM BRAVO

Pub SCEE | **Dev** Zipper | **Web** socom-game.com

"An awesome online mode lets you boss the virtual war zone with a group of your mates. Terrific, really."

PSM3 Rating 83%

ALSO RECOMMENDED STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3 MAX 84% | FIELD COMMANDER 82% | [illegible] 81% | [illegible] 84% | ACE COMBAT X 80% | METAL GEAR SOLID: PORTABLE OPS 83%

SHOOTERS/ SHOOT-'EM-UPS

KILLZONE: LIBERATION

Pub Sony | **Dev** Guerilla | **Web** killzone.com

"The FPS has been ditched for a friendly 3D set-up. A massively enjoyable blaster that suits your PSP perfectly."

PSM3 Rating 85%

SOCOM: FIRETEAM BRAVO

Pub SCEE | **Dev** Zipper | **Web** socom-game.com

"*Fireteam Bravo* not only looks lush on the tiny screen, it handles like a dream as well. A seamless experience."

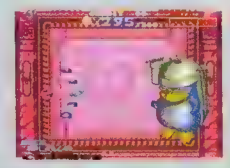
PSM3 Rating 83%

PARODIUS PORTABLE

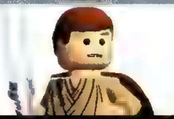
Pub Konami | **Dev** Konami | **Web** konami.com

"*Parodius* and its four sequels. Contains space penguins and aubergine-spouting mountains. Madness, really."

PSM3 Rating 81%



ALSO RECOMMENDED INFECTED 77% | [illegible] 79% | GRADIUS PORTABLE 78% | [illegible] 70% | AFTER BURNER 77% | ACE COMBAT X 80% | [illegible] 78%



Compilations One game? Hmm. Two, three or more? You're on...

TERRIFYING

The Silent Hill Collection

Pub Konami | **Dev** Team Silent
Web konami-data.com/silenthill

The second, third and fourth *Silent Hills* all on one disc. Feel the fear of *SH2*. Marvel at the madness of *SH3*. Shrug your shoulders at the so-so *SH4*. But despite *SH4*, this is pretty much a vital purchase.

PSM3 Rating 89%

FORCEFUL

LSW: The Complete Saga

Pub Lucasarts | **Dev** Traveller's Tales | **Web** starwars.lego.com

Two *LSW* games, spanning six movies, all polished up nicely for PS3. There are even extra bits, including new characters... and some of the whiffiest Sixaxis bits ever.

PSM3 Rating 80%

RETRO

Metal Slug Anthology

Pub Ignition | **Dev** SNK
Web snkplaymoreusa.com

Not one, not two, not eight, but *seven* of the *Metal Slug* games in one handy package. Do you love hardcore side-scrolling shooters more than your mum and crisp sarnies combined? Then go nuts. Far from varied, but this is solid, old-school blasting action.

PSM3 Rating 79%

Disagree with our choices? Write us an explosive mail telling us why we're complete idiots. Lob your word bombs at psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "WRONG!"

Next month

The next incredible issue of PSM3 goes on sale Thursday, January 17

Nice Apps

Trick up your console

Ready to rumble

App DualShock 3
Web play-asia.com

So we've finally got our hands on a DualShock 3 and, unsurprisingly, it feels much the same to hold as a DualShock 2 did. In comparison to Sixaxis, however, it's that bit weightier to hold, and feels all the better for it. It rumbles, of course, making the likes of *Call Of Duty 4* even more satisfying. When you're playing old PS2 games on your PS3 – if you've a PS3 that can, of course – it'll rumble in those too. Of course, we'll have to wait until March to see DualShock 3 in UK shops – but those with Japanese machines might be interested in importing. Expect supplies to be scarce, though.

Glowing for gold

App Glowing pad
Web dreamgear.net

We've said lots of times before that Sony's official pads are better than third-party efforts, and we stand by that. However, what Sixaxis/DualShock 3 don't do is glow like a lava lamp. The Lava Glow controller does, though – it's filled with a bright blue (or red – there are two different flavours) liquid that glows, but, vitally, doesn't get as hot as some lava lamps – so don't worry about burning all your skin off your hands. You could pair the Lava Glow with the Darklite lightbar (a bar you attach to your PS3 that also glows), then turn off the lights and make your PS3 set-up shimmer like a seedy Parisian back alley. Nice.

Stand up straight

App PSP stand
Web playstation.com/signature

It's been a while since Sony added to their range of 'aspirational' (read 'expensive') Signature products. In the past, they've come up with everything from costly PSP pouches to Sony-branded wine glasses. This time, it's a simple, elegant PSP stand. Looks lovely, but would you pay 10 quid for what's basically a lump of plastic?

Early Warning System

Your PlayStation release schedule*

Want it?
Tick it!

Game	Publisher	Out	Format	
PDC World Championship Darts 2008	Oxygen	Jan 11	PS2	☐
Ferrari Challenge	System 3	Jan 25	PS3	☐
Dark Sector	D3P	Jan 25	PS3	☐
Blacksite: Area 51	Midway	Jan 25	PS3	☐
Phantasy Star: Ambition Of The Illuminus	Sega	Jan 25	PS2	☐
Castlevania: Dracula X Chronicles	Konami	Jan 25	PSP	☐
Battlefield: Bad Company	[illegible]	Feb 1	[illegible]	☐
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	Codemasters	Feb 1	PS3	☐
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	Ubisoft	Feb 1	PS3	☐
Turok	Touchstone	Feb 8	PS3	☐
Frontlines: Fuels Of War	THQ	Feb 8	PS3	☐
Mercenaries 2	EA	Feb 29	PS3	☐
Lost	Ubisoft	Feb 29	PS3	☐
Sega Superstars Tennis	Sega	Feb 29	PS3	☐
Burnout Paradise	EA	Feb	PS3	☐
Rock Band	EA	Feb	PS3	☐
Devil May Cry 4	Capcom	March 28	PS2	☐
Alone In The Dark	Atari	March 28	PS3	☐
Condemned 2: Bloodshot	Sega	March 28	PS3	☐
Unreal Tournament 3	Midway	March	PS3	☐
LittleBigPlanet	Sony	TBC	PS3	☐
Killzone 2	Sony	TBC	PS3	☐
Gran Turismo 5	Sony	March	PS3	☐
The Club	Sega	March	PS3	☐
Golden Axe	Sega	March	PS3	☐
Midnight Club LA	Rockstar	March	PS3	☐
Rock Band	EA	March	PS3	☐
Grand Theft Auto 4	Rockstar	April 25	PS3	☐
Metal Gear Solid 4	Konami	Q2 2008	PS3	☐
FIFA Street 3	EA	April	PS3	☐
The Iron Man	Sega	May	PS3	☐
Bionic Commando	Capcom	May	PS3	☐
White Knight Story	Sony	Spring	PS3	☐
Heist	Codemasters	June 27	PS3	☐
Wet	[illegible]	June 27	[illegible]	☐
Prototype	Sierra	June	PS3	☐
Brutal Legend	Sierra	July	PS3	☐
Tekken 6	Sony	Summer	PS3	☐
The Bourne Conspiracy	Sierra	August	PS3	☐
Saint's Row 2	THQ	Sep 5	PS3	☐

*Caution: all dates are accurate at time of press but liable to drastic change

Battlefield: Bad Company

Our parents always warned us against keeping bad company, but from what we've seen so far of this latest *Battlefield*, they're wrong. More soon.

Unreal Tournament 3

March – a month of uncertain release dates, but whenever in March *Unreal* (and *GTA4*, *GT5* and the rest) is out, we'll be all over it like a really filthy rash.

Wet

We're expecting news of a new *Tomb Raider* soon, but in the absence of Lara, *Wet*'s star Ruby will attempt to become PS3's defining lady action heroine.

Going, Going, Gone PlayStation auction action

My Little Pyramid Head

Got a My Little Pony-loving niece that you don't like very much? Then why not chill her to the very bones with a My Little Pyramid Head? But not to worry if you think the fearsome cranium of Toblerone Bonce is too much – you can take it off. The pony's wearing a gimp mask underneath it, mind you, so maybe that's not such a good idea.

Sold $25.00 **Original Price** $25.00

Profit None

SSX snowboard controller

Ah, the rarely-sighted controller board for *SSX*. There's a reason why it's quite rare, however – it's a bit cheap and plasticky, and not actually very good. Still, this is the sort of thing that *SSX* completists would go nuts for, regardless of how awkward and clumsy it actually is to use. We'll stick with the, well, sticks, thank you very much all the same.

Sold No **Original Price** $20.00

Profit None

Tomb Raider slot machine

A certain type of magazine might make a joke about 'Lara's slots' here, but we're *definitely* not that lowbrow. The bloke selling this machine is, though, talking in his sales blurb about how "this machine fascinates you with its beautiful body". If that's what floats your boat, fella. Anyway, this looks quite slick – and seems to have loads of modes – but we'll pass on the chance to bid on it.

BANKRUPTING

Sold No **Original Price** $79.99

Profit None

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"OUR WINDUPS SAY YOUR VICTIMS NAME!"
Choose a windup, tell us their name & number... sit back & listen-in secretly!

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2 **The Honey Trap** Are they cheating on you?
3 **Is he a real man?** Man or a big girls blouse?
4 **Is she a lesbian?** Lezza or little lady?
5 **Overdue credit card bill** - How bloody much?
6 **You've got my girlfriend pregnant!**
7 **Extortionate mobile phone bill** Too much porn!
8 **Mad builder on the phone** Wants paying now!
9 **Wrong number** Is that the massage parlour?
10 **Your numbers on my boyfriends mobile** Why?
11 **Your numbers on my girlfriends mobile** Why?

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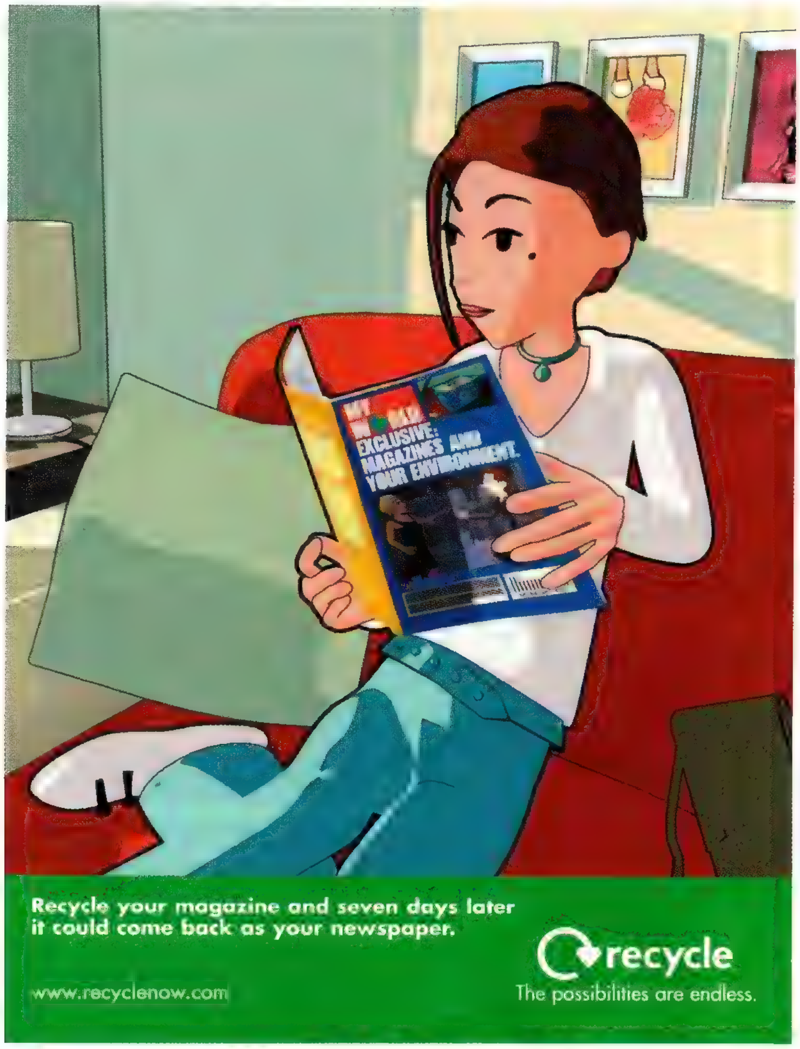
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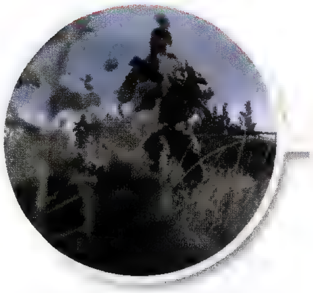

CoD4 has gaming's greatest moment of 2007
"Follow this if you can, *Killzone*"
page 50

***Rock Band* is a juggernaut starting out**
"Once the song packs get going, it'll be unstoppable"
page 54

***Drake's Fortune* is like going on holiday, but on your PS3**
"It's like an interactive holiday brochure"
page 60

***Orange Box* redefines the word 'value'**
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Classic TV moments re-enacted in games makes us happy
"Sideshow Bob steps on a rake and gets thwacked"
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Printed in the UK by Southernprint on behalf of Future.
Distributed in the UK by Seymour Distribution Ltd,
2 East Poultry Avenue, London EC1A 9PT. **Tel:** 0207 429 4000

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Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR).

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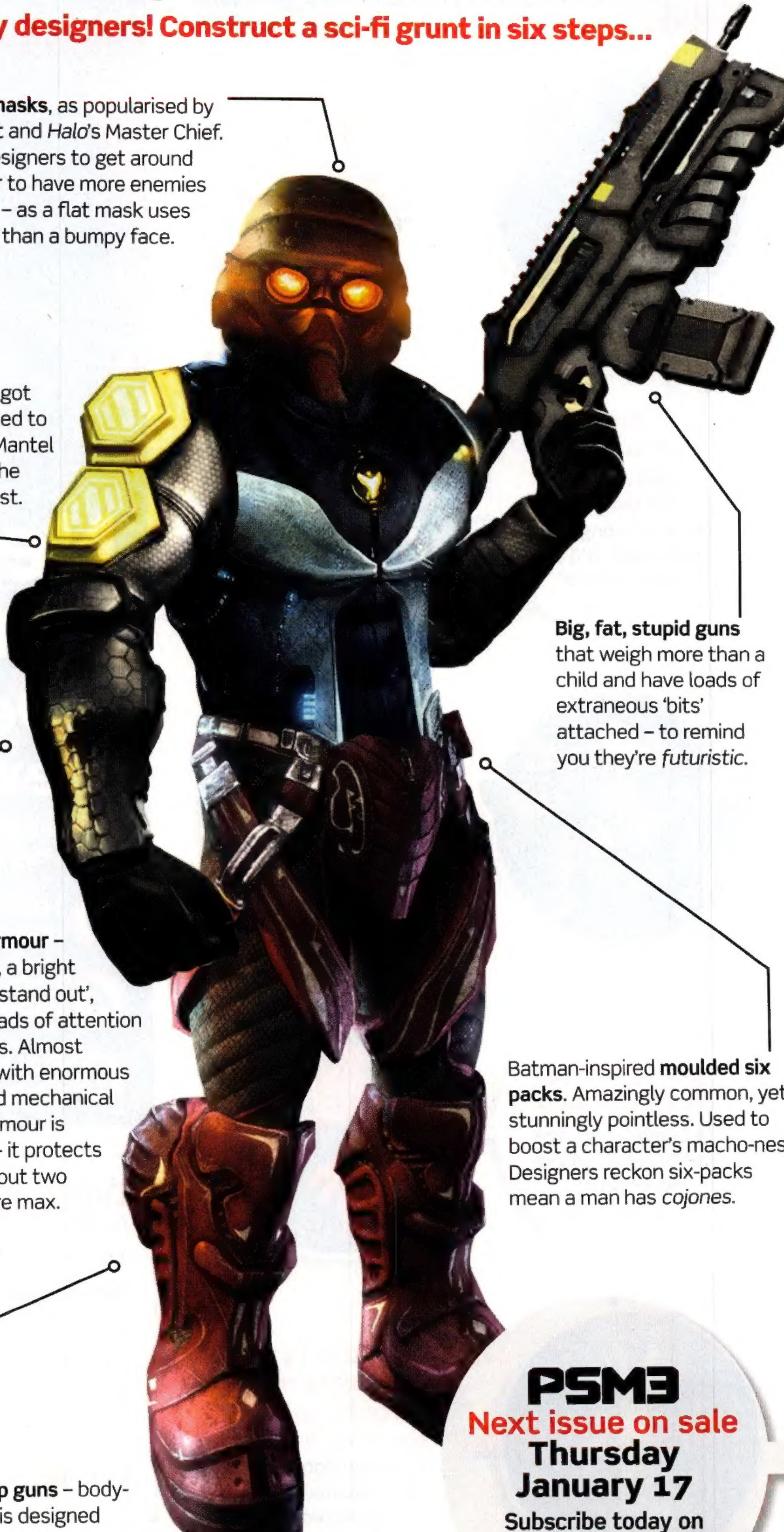
The world's most generic game character

Attention lazy designers! Construct a sci-fi grunt in six steps...



Face-concealing masks, as popularised by *Killzone*'s Helghast and *Halo*'s Master Chief. A way for 'busy' designers to get around rendering faces, or to have more enemies on-screen at once – as a flat mask uses *way* less polygons than a bumpy face.

Sometimes they've got **glowing bits** attached to them – see *Haze*'s Mantel soldiers' arms and the *TimeShift* guy's chest.

Big, fat, stupid guns that weigh more than a child and have loads of extraneous 'bits' attached – to remind you they're *futuristic*.

Futuristic body armour – sometimes, oddly, a bright colour to make it 'stand out', thus attracting loads of attention from your enemies. Almost always equipped with enormous shoulder pads and mechanical codpieces. The armour is purely aesthetic – it protects the wearer for about two shot's worth of fire max.

Batman-inspired **moulded six packs**. Amazingly common, yet stunningly pointless. Used to boost a character's macho-ness. Designers reckon six-packs mean a man has *cojones*.

Nowhere to keep guns – body-hugging armour is designed specifically to accentuate every rippling muscle, you see. Adding lumpy gun holsters would detract from all that intensive rendering on the body model. Bah.

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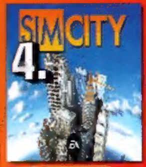
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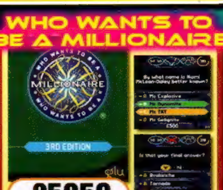
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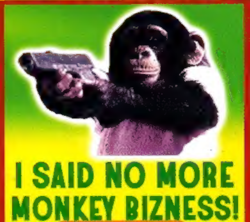
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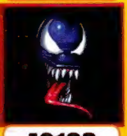
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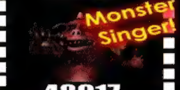

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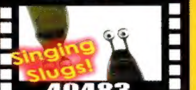

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